TOMMY TUCKER ON A PLANTATION

DOROTHY LYMAN LEETCH

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TOMMY TUCKER ON A PLANTATION

"SO YOU WANT TO WEAR A WIG, DO YOU?"
—*Page 74.*

TOMMY TUCKER ON A PLANTATION

BY

DOROTHY LYMAN LEETCH

FOREWORD BY

LOUISE P. LATIMER

DIRECTOR, WORK WITH CHILDREN
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TO

BESSIE

AND

NICKIE

FOREWORD

Tommy Tucker makes a neat bow and invites any children who would see a real plantation to board a great sailing vessel and travel up the river with him. Those who wish to go must not mind if they have no three-cornered hats; no beautiful blue coats and shiny buckles on their shoes. They can just pretend.

Many children invited on this trip may have visited the Massachusetts Colony already; they may have read something of the town life of the early New Englander, of his Thanksgivings, his good and bad times with the Indians. When they arrive in Virginia they will see the country life of the set-

tlers, the lovely gardens, the tobacco fields, the beautiful relations existing between the "Big House" and the cabin.

Teachers who are perplexed with the problem of showing the children plantation life without simple books on the subject will welcome Tommy. Librarians also will be glad to see the little boy coming in his great coach, for they will have in mind the times they have heard, "Please send me a set of books for my 3B class; we are studying Colonial life in Virginia," or, over the telephone, "I asked for a set of books on Colonial Virginia and you have not sent me a single book on the subject that the children can read." The poor librarian in such cases apologizes and explains, as she has apologized and explained to many other teachers:

"There are no whole books on Colonial life in Virginia that a third-grade child can read. We can send you a few simple books on the settlement of Virginia, one or two books with an easy chapter or two on Colonial Virginia, but that is the best we can do."

To take children with him to such a plantation or to bring such a plantation to them is Tommy's mission.

LOUISE P. LATIMER,
DIRECTOR OF WORK WITH YOUNG PEOPLE,

The Public Library,
Washington, D. C.

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Tommy Tucker On A Plantation

CHAPTER I

IN NORFOLK TOWN

ON a bright day, one long-ago springtime, a crowd stood on a wharf at Norfolk town. They were watching a ship with great white sails make its way toward the sea.

At the very edge of the wharf stood a boy. He was waving his three-cornered hat and shouting with all his might, "Good-bye, Mother, good-bye, good-bye, Father! Good-bye, Betsy, good-

bye, Polly! Good-bye! Good-bye, good-bye!"

It happened that the ship was taking the Tucker family back to England, all but the small boy left on the wharf.

He was Talbot Matthew Tucker, who would not be eight years old till next birthday. But how grown-up he felt! Only that morning he had made the twins, Betsy and Polly, promise not to call him Tommy any more.

"If I am big enough to be left in Virginia by myself," he had said, "I'm big enough for my own name!"

So they had promised, and though they were girls and only five years old, Talbot was pleased.

He had been able to say his whole name ever since he was a very little boy, but people always laughed and said,

"That is much too long a name for you; Tommy Tucker is just your size." Now he hoped people would call him by his grown-up name.

The ship grew smaller as it sailed away. Talbot could not see the twins' red capes on the deck any longer. Soon only the sails were left, and as he watched, they seemed to slip between the sparkling water and the blue sky and the ship was gone.

Of course, Talbot was not left all alone. His Aunt Sally Talbot was going to take care of him as long as he stayed in Norfolk. She stood beside him while he watched the ship sail away, and now that it was gone she said, "We had better go home, Talbot, for it will soon be dinner time."

Talbot liked his Aunt Sally very

much, because she had never called him Tommy.

So they wound their way back between barrels of pork, flour, beef, and tobacco, and piles of lumber. These cluttered the wharf, waiting to be loaded on to ships, which would carry them to the West Indies and England.

Talbot had been interested in ships and cargoes ever since his trip from England. While he had been in Norfolk he had often come to the wharf with his father, and sometimes with his Uncle Matthew's servant, Solomon.

This old negro had been brought from the West Indies many years ago. He never tired of telling "Lil' Massa Talbot" about the ships and the sea and the lands where palm-trees grew and big green parrots sat in the trees.

Talbot and Aunt Sally walked slowly back into the town. Soon they came to the Market-Place. Here, it being a market day, the country people were gathered to sell or exchange their farm products. Talbot had often come to market. He liked to walk between the stalls and watch people buy the fresh fruits and vegetables from those who had them for sale. There were plump fowls, too, and fish and oysters fresh from the bay.

Every time Talbot came to market he asked about the Fair which was held there once a year. The servants had told him about it. He was very eager for Fair-time to come so that he might see for himself.

To-day, as they passed, he asked once more about the pigs with shaved and

greased tails, which were turned loose for the crowd to catch.

"And, Aunty," he said, "where do they put the slippery pole with the hat on the top?"

Solomon had told him about the sack-races, and the barrel-races, too. Talbot wanted to know just where the races started. And he stopped to see just how far the best runner had ever been able to go.

To-day Aunt Sally was willing to talk about anything that pleased him. She was thinking about his mother and father and the twins sailing away over the ocean. She wondered if Talbot would be lonely so far away from them. So she said, "If you are here, when Fair-time comes, I shall ask Uncle Matthew

to take you to see the pigs and the funny races."

"Oh, Aunty, will you? Oh, I hope it comes soon!" he said. Then he remembered the "if" and turning to his aunt he asked, "Why won't I be here at Fair-time? Didn't my father say I was to stay in Virginia until he came back for me. And I must do what my father said," he added in a determined little voice.

Aunt Sally took his hand and tried to explain. "You see, Talbot, it was your father's wish that you should pay a visit to your Uncle George Huntington's plantation."

"Where is that, Aunt Sally?" Talbot asked.

"It is a long way from here, up river,"

Aunt Sally replied. "We shall have to find a way for you to make the journey safely. Letters go so slowly that it takes time to plan for your trip."

"Please, Aunt Sally, can't I wait till after the Fair? They don't have fairs on the plantation, do they?"

"No, Talbot, not fairs, but there will be many things for you to see and do on the plantation. You'll like the trip, and perhaps," she added, "you can go part of the way on a boat."

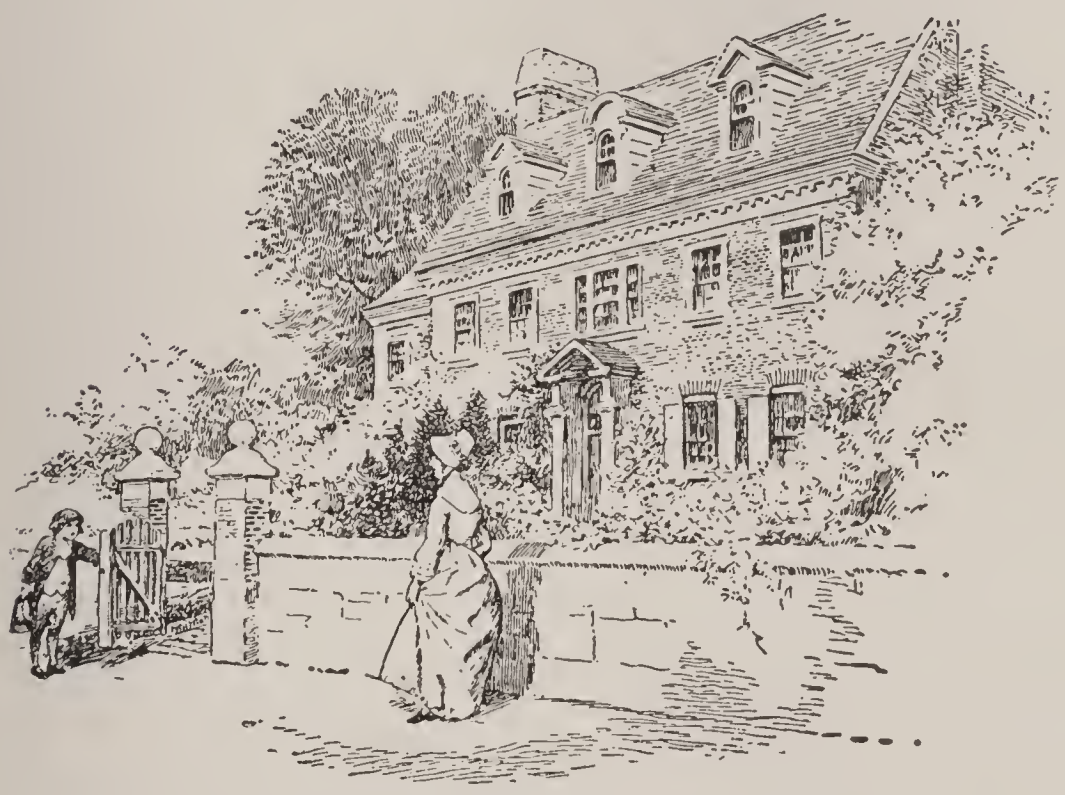
This interested Talbot. If he were going to travel on a ship again, perhaps he would like to go.

"As soon," Aunt Sally added, "as your Uncle Matthew and Captain Daniel come back with our brig from the West Indies, we will plan for your trip."

"Why, we are nearly to your house,"

Talbot said. Then he ran ahead to open the gate for his aunty.

A narrow brick walk, between low box hedges, led to the front door. The white lilacs near the house were be-



TALBOT OPENS THE GATE

ginning to bloom. Like most of the houses in old Norfolk, this one was built of Dutch brick. The walls were very thick. The doorway was narrow and

near the ground. The windows were small. The roof was steep and built in the Dutch fashion, with a big chimney at each end.

Talbot ran around to the back. His aunt entered through the front door. The heavy brass knocker, old Solomon's pride, scattered rays of sunshine in the hall. Finding none of the servants in the house, she went to look them up. They were down by the kitchen—a small building at the end of the garden.

Martha the cook, Becky the maid, black Solomon, and Talbot, all were bending over something that Solomon had in his lap.

No one noticed Mistress Talbot as she came down the covered path. She clapped her hands to attract attention

and exclaimed, "Solomon, what have you there?"

Talbot came running toward her, "Oh, Aunt Sally, it's a goose, a wild goose that Solomon shot in the marshes. But it's not dead, only its wing is broken. He brought it home to me for a pet. May I keep it, please, Aunty, please?" Talbot begged, catching hold of her hand.

The old negro stepped forward with the big, struggling goose in his arms. It flapped and fluttered and stretched out its long neck, honking piteously in fright and pain.

"Mis' Ta'bot, I'se tryin' to bin' up de wing on dis bird. It fell in de marshes and I thought lil' Massa Ta'bot would like to hab it fo' a pet."

"But, Solomon," his mistress said, "how can we keep a wild goose here?"

"Missus, we can make a lil' pen in de corner ob de yard and by the time dis po' hurt wing am well, Mister Goose will be tame." And he added, "Hit will gib de lil' Massa sompin ter do now dat his mammy and daddy and de chilluns hab lef' him."

This decided it. Mistress Talbot smiled and said they might keep the goose. Then she told Martha to get dinner, and took Becky with her to the house.

Talbot stayed to see what was to be done with the goose.

CHAPTER II

TALBOT STARTS ON HIS JOURNEY

ONE morning about a month later, Talbot was out early, feeding his goose. The hurt wing was well now. It had been clipped, too, so that the goose could not fly. The pet had been named for black Solomon. Talbot was trying hard to teach it to come when he called and to "speak" for its food.

Mistress Talbot, too, was out early to work in her garden. She wore a broad-brimmed straw hat and mitts. Her flowered sack of shalloon fell loosely over a quilted petticoat of light-blue

camlet. On her feet were gay red morocco shoes. She sang a little song as she worked, and she looked as bright as a flower.

Mistress Talbot loved her garden and worked to make it bloom from spring to fall. First came the jonquils and daffodils. These had nearly finished blooming now.

How Betsy and Polly would have loved to make tea-sets out of the bright, sunny flowers. In spite of the fact that they were girls, Talbot missed them very much.

On the shady side of the garden, by the old brick wall, lilies-of-the-valley were in full flower. All around, the periwinkle showed blue stars among glossy green leaves. Over where the sun shone longest was a bed of moss-

pinks. These climbed and spread gay pink flowers over rocks which Mistress Talbot had piled up to make them feel at home.

Talbot liked Aunt Sally's wild garden best. This was down past the spring-house. There a big mimosa-tree shaded the little stream trickling from the spring. The wind-flowers and dame's violets and the tiny blue innocence grew and bloomed as cheerily here as though they had never been transplanted from the woods. Talbot had found these wild flowers blooming before any others in the garden.

This morning after he tired of teaching Solomon, he went over where Aunt Sally was transplanting hollyhocks. She let him dig some of the holes and water the young plants.

Talbot liked to work, and begged Aunt Sally to let him help. She promised to do this as soon as he was sure which of the little green shoots were flowers. "When you can tell the young plants from the weeds, you may weed the flower-beds," she told him.

Then they wandered over to the bed where larkspur, candytuft, lady slippers, snapdragons, and clove-pinks were growing. Talbot could name nearly all of these without a mistake. Then Aunt Sally tried him on the herb-bed where she grew feverfew, camomile, and pennyroyal. These were harder to remember, and Talbot gave up.

"You have done well this morning," Aunt Sally said, "and you may soon help me weed the beds. Now, run and tell Martha to send up breakfast for

us." And Talbot flew off to the kitchen.

Mistress Talbot stopped to gather a nosegay of heartsease, with their quaint little faces she loved so, adding sprays of lilies-of-the-valley. She sang to herself as she picked her flowers, and did not hear the front gate open and close.

Two men hurried up the walk to the door. They did not wait to knock, but walked in at once, through the house and out again at the back door, which was standing open. The first thing Mistress Talbot knew about it was a big cheery voice calling into the garden. "Good morning, Mistress Talbot." Then she knew her husband had come home.

Talbot coming back from the kitchen heard men's voices in the house. He stopped in the hall to be sure where the

voices came from. Then a jolly laugh rang out in the front room. He guessed right away that Uncle Matthew had come to surprise them and that the brig was in.

Running to the doorway, Talbot saw Aunt Sally sitting on the arm of Uncle Matthew's chair. She had her arm around his shoulder. The nosegay of lilies and heartsease was still in her hand. She was too happy about the surprise to remember the flowers. There was another man, too. A big, sunburned, pleasant-looking man, talking to Aunt Sally.

Uncle Matthew spied Talbot, "Why, here's the boy! How are you, lad? They tell me you have a trained goose," he said, and put out a hand to greet him in quite a grown-up fashion.

Talbot, in spite of an eagerness to talk about his goose, shook hands, and made a trim bow, as he had been taught to do. "I am so glad you are home, Uncle Matthew. Aunt Sally said you would take me to the Fair when you came back," he said.

"And so I shall, lad, when Fair-time comes," he laughed. "This, Captain Daniel, is my nephew. A fine boy, eh? Quite a man to stay here in Virginia by himself."

And Talbot made another bow to the Captain.

Just then Mistress Talbot heard Becky in the dining-room.

"Go, Talbot; tell Becky we have company to breakfast. And here," she said, "take these flowers to her for the table."

A little later they were seated around the breakfast table in the pleasant dining-room. The sun came through the windows looking out upon the garden. The dark, rich wainscoted walls fairly shone in the bright light. The table was laid with fine china and silver. There was an abundance of good food. The four lingered over their meal. There was much to tell, the news of the town, and the events of the trip. Talbot listened and had a chance to tell, too, about Solomon, the goose. Every one agreed that never before had there been a goose that could speak for its food and come when called.

The breakfast was finally interrupted by the arrival of a travel-stained messenger from Myrtle Hill Plantation. He came with a letter from Mr. Hunt-

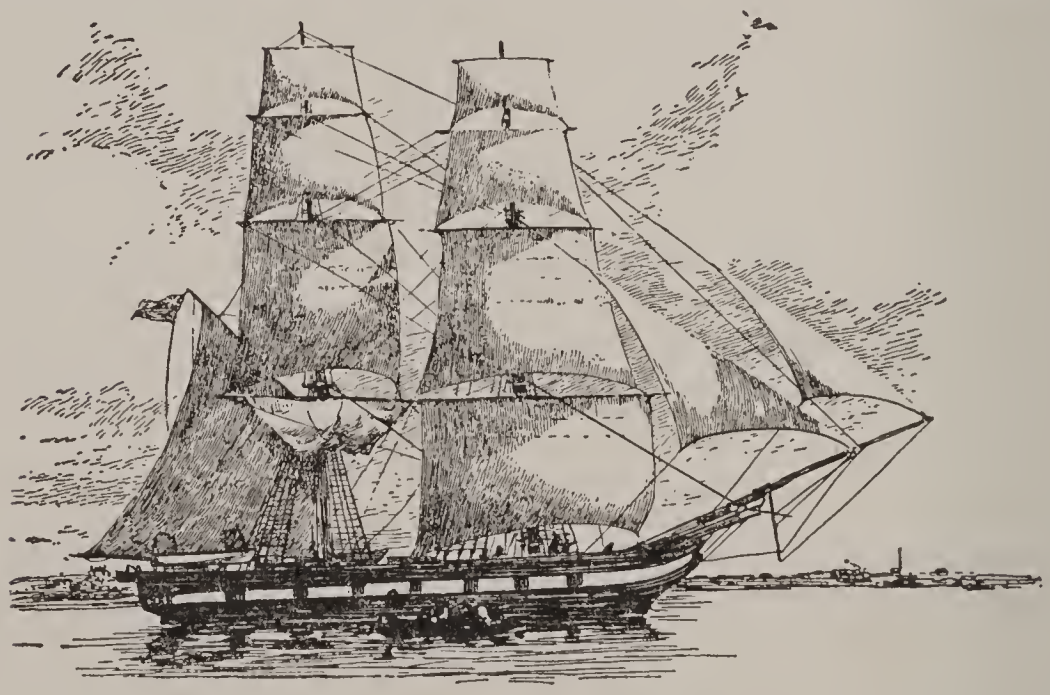
ington and was to carry back the reply. Talbot guessed that the letter was about him, and he wanted to stay and hear, but Aunt Sally said, "Go, tell Martha to give the man who brought the letter a good breakfast. Show him the way to the kitchen, and if you come back quickly you may hear the letter."

Talbot did his errand and hurried back to hear the news. The letter was about his visit, as he had guessed. Of course his Uncle George wanted him for a visit, and a long one, too. If Mr. Matthew Talbot could arrange to send young Talbot Tucker as far as Hobb's Landing, some one would meet him there.

There was a lot of talking and planning. Captain Daniel helped. In a week's time the Captain would be going

up river. Talbot could go with him as far as Hobb's Landing.

"Then I'm to go in the brig. Hurrah!" Talbot shouted, jumping up and down with joy. And so it was decided.



THE BRIG

The week before the journey passed quickly. Talbot was so excited that he quite forgot the Fair he had been looking forward to. Uncle Matthew took him several times to see the brig. It

was a busy time at the wharf. Piled everywhere were the hogsheads of sugar, molasses, and fruits from the West Indies which the brig was to carry up the river to the planters. Flour, beef, and pork would be exchanged for it.

Everywhere negroes lounged in the sun or rolled great casks and bags on to the ship. They chanted weird melodies as they worked. The sun beat down; odors of the cargo mingled with those of old wooden piles rotted by the wash of salt water. Talbot loved the heat and the noise and decided that he would like to be a sailor.

At home there was but little to do to get Talbot ready for the journey. Aunt Sally freshened and mended his clothes. She let him help pack his own little

trunk. He expected to take the goose with him, and until the last day thought that he could. There were a good many tears shed when Talbot understood that his Uncle George had not invited Solomon. The old negro promised to take care of his pet until "Lil' Massa" came back. This comforted Talbot somewhat.

The day to leave came at last. Talbot's little trunk went aboard the brig early. Just before sailing-time, Uncle Matthew came back to the house to get Talbot. Aunt Sally went to the wharf with them. Talbot went aboard with Captain Daniel at once.

He heard a shouting of orders, confusion, and noise everywhere, and saw hurrying sailors getting the ship under weigh. The great sails cracked and

snapped. Before he knew they had started, Talbot saw the wharf begin to move away. Aunt Sally and Uncle Matthew were waving good-bye.

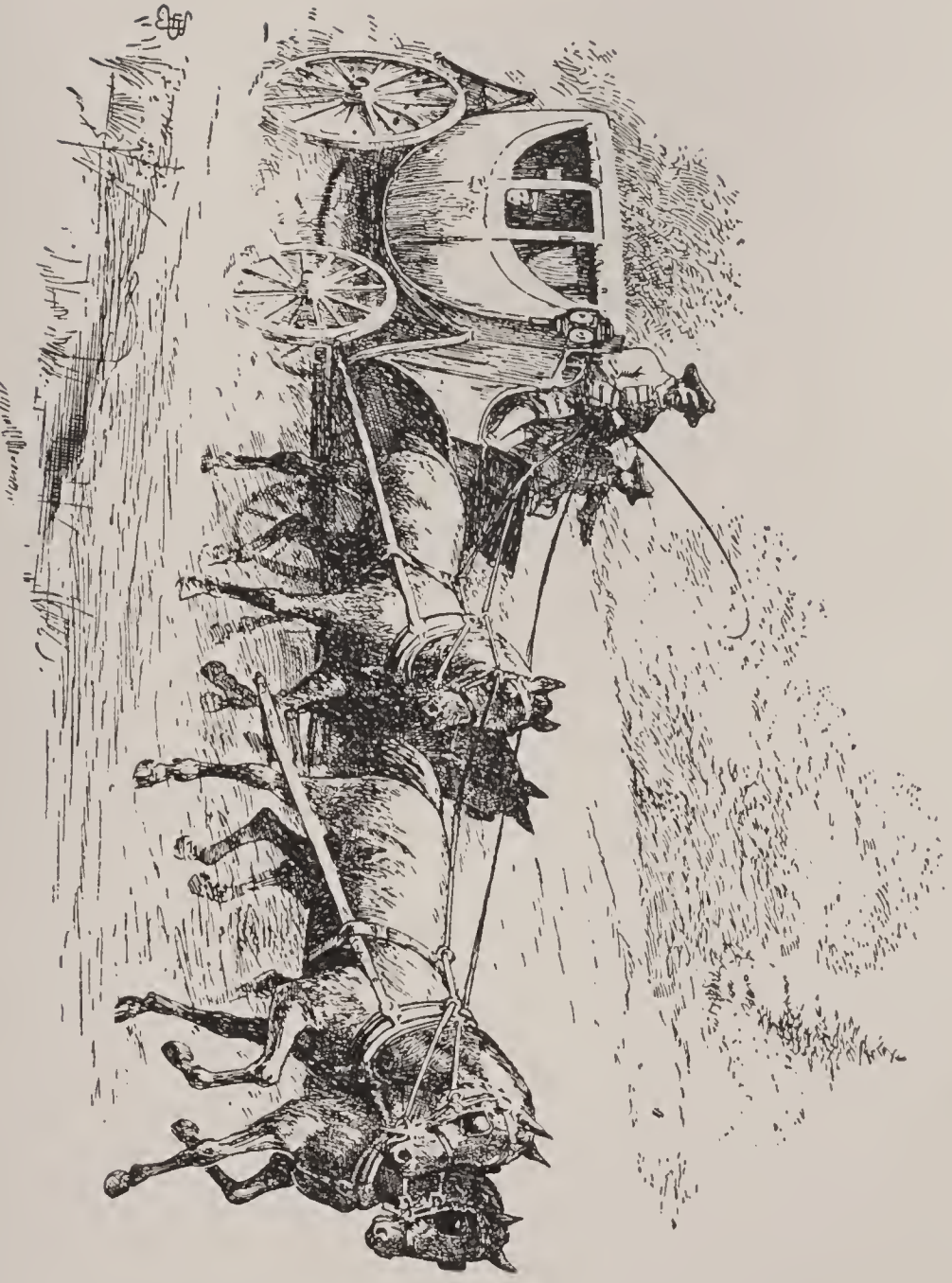
Talbot waved his hat and shouted as long as he could see Aunt Sally's handkerchief. When the wharves and the houses were hidden behind a point of land, Talbot felt that he had really started on his journey.

CHAPTER III

TRAVELLING

A GREAT coach lumbered over a rough Virginia road. It was a very gay coach and shiny-new. The body was painted bright green and the wheels yellow. It stood so high off the road that without the two little steps which let down on each side it would have been very hard to get in and out of it.

The driver's seat was high up in the front. There sat Sam, the coachman, and a little boy he called Swift. Both were as black as the four fine horses which drew the coach. They were dressed in livery to match the coach;



INSIDE THE COACH, ALL BY HIMSELF

green coats, yellow vests, and broad three-cornered hats. The sun sparkling on their buttons and the harness of the horses made a gay picture as they drove along the wild, lonely road.

Talbot was inside the coach, all by himself. He had bumped and jolted over the road since morning, and was very tired and wished for some one to talk to.

This was his first trip in a coach with four horses. At first he felt very important sitting in the middle of the green leather seat with his feet resting on his little brown trunk. He slipped and slid on the shiny new leather from one side of the seat to the other, as the coach rocked from side to side.

Then he got tired and climbed up on his knees to look out of the tiny window

in the back of the coach. He thought it must have been hours that he watched the road unwind back of him and get narrower and narrower, until it disappeared in the sky.

He couldn't see the bumps until after the coach was over them. Once they struck a big one that sent him up against the top of the coach with such a whack that his little cocked beaver hat was pushed down over his eyes.

That hurt most awfully, and he wanted to cry. Then he remembered he was grown-up enough to travel alone and Sam might hear. But Sam kept on driving, never stopping once to look back to see how little "Marse" Talbot was getting along.

Then Talbot tried lying down on the seat, and in spite of the bumps and rock-

ing of the coach, he must have gone to sleep.

He dreamed he was again on the boat that had brought him from Norfolk. He was out on the deck with Captain Daniel who let him stand by the wheel as he steered the boat from one side of the river to the other, so the wind would fill out the big white sails. They stopped at wharves where they loaded and unloaded great boxes and bales, with lots of noise and calling and shouting among the sailors and the negroes. The Captain let him watch from a distance where he wouldn't get hurt or be in the way. Once the boat bumped into a wharf so hard that he was knocked down. Captain Daniel said it was because he didn't have good sea-legs.

Just here Talbot woke up on the floor of the coach. He had bounced off the seat in his sleep, slid across the top of his own little trunk, and landed on his best beaver hat as he fell.

The coach stopped and outside he could hear voices.

"Yes, suh. This is Marse Huntington's new coach. The *Lucy Lee* done brung her from London on her las' trip.

"The livery, suh, that Swift an' me is wearin', war made in London, suh."

Then another voice said, "Yes, it is very nice, Sam. Are you out just to show off the Colonel's coach?"

"Laws no, suh, I'se carryin' little Marse Talbot to his uncle, suh."

"Have you really got a little boy shut up in there?"

The door opened and Master Talbot looked out at a pleasant-faced man in riding-breeches of doeskin, worn with a blue coat which hung to his knees, opening over a scarlet vest. His cocked hat sat squarely on his white wig. Wide-topped brown leather boots reached high up on his thighs. He smiled at the little boy and helped him down the steps to the ground.

"Good day, sir," he said. "So you are making a journey to see your uncle, Mr. George Huntington?"

"Yes, sir. I'm Talbot Matthew Tucker. I have come from Norfolk, —ever so far away—on a boat. When shall I get to my uncle's house, sir?"

The nice man laughed and looked down at the little traveller and seemed to understand how long the trip had been.

"Would you like to stretch your legs a little?"

"Yes, sir," Talbot said. For indeed it had been a long time since he had walked on good, steady ground. There had been the boat trip, you see, and then the long ride in the coach.

Sam felt safe in letting his charge go off with his new friend, for it was young Mr. Johns, who lived not far away on the next plantation to his master's, and often was a visitor at "Marse" George's home.

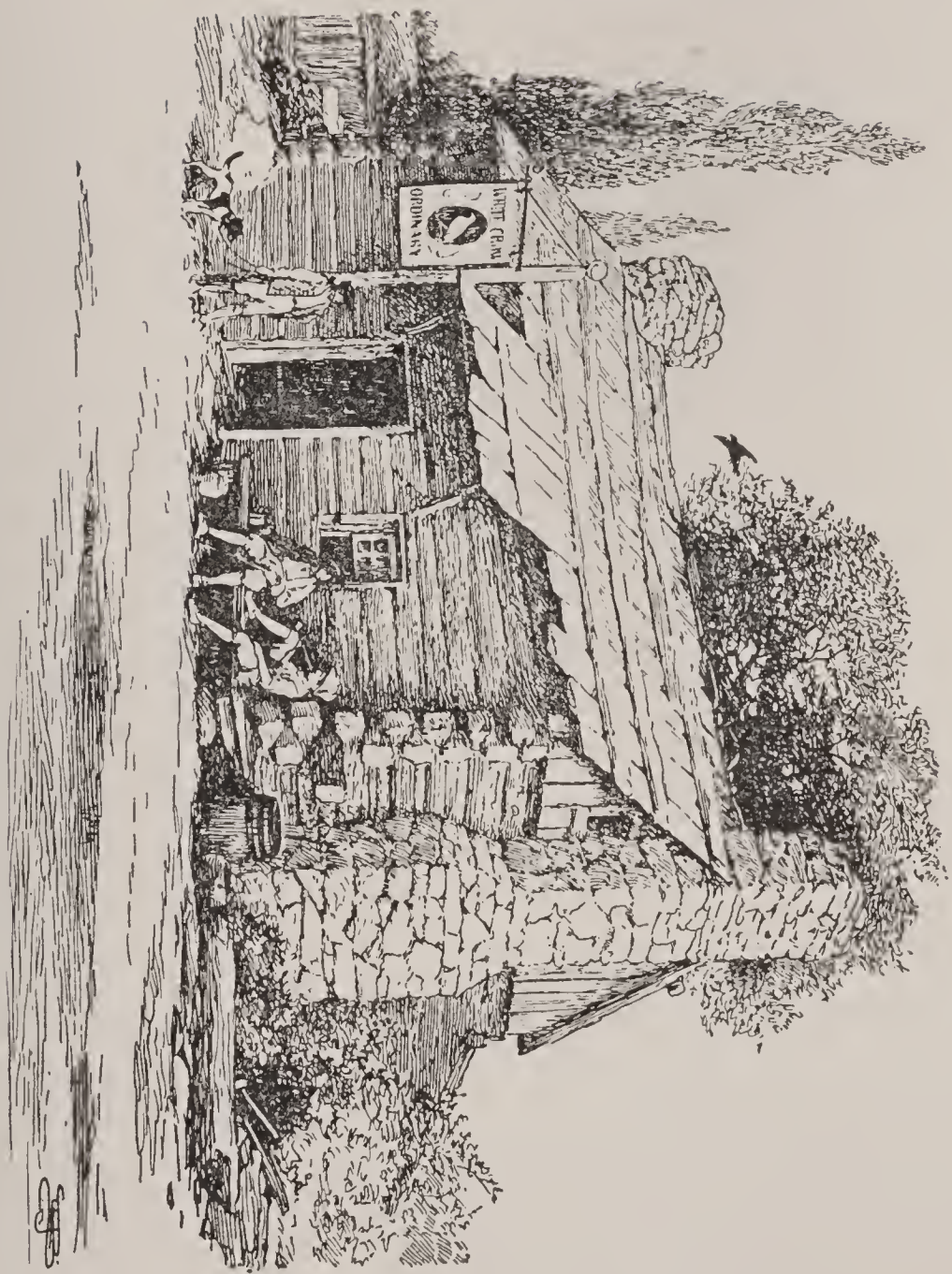
CHAPTER IV

AT THE INN

TALBOT and his new friend went across the road towards a small building made of hewed logs held together with white plaster. Great stone chimneys rose at each end. Beside the door hung a sign with a big white crow painted on it.

"I never saw a white crow," said the little boy. "In Norfolk all the crows are black."

"So they are here,—but inns often have queer signs. This one says 'White Crow Ordinary.' That means an inn," Mr. Johns explained. "There are only a few of them about here, and they are



"WHITE CROW ORDINARY"

poor shelter for a traveller. But it does not matter, for the door of every gentleman's house is open to a stranger in this part of the world."

"Where is this part of the world?" Talbot asked.

"Why, Virginia, lad."

"But I've travelled so far, on a boat and all,—I thought I would be somewhere else."

"You could travel many days, and go on boats up many rivers and still be in Virginia. Once," he said, "I went far out over the mountains into a great wide valley, and it was all in Virginia. I saw Indians and bears, and had to ride through forests where no white man had been before. We cut marks on the trees with our axes so we could find our way home. It was a rough trip and I was

glad to get back into my own part of the land."

By that time they were inside of the Inn. Mr. Johns and Talbot seated themselves at one of the long, rough wooden tables, on a bench which was too high for Talbot, so he swung his feet.

The room was nearly all of the down-stairs part of the house. There was sand on the floor, and there were great rafters overhead, black with smoke. At one end was the fireplace, where the cooking was done. A big iron pot hung from a rod, and several little pots and kettles sat near the coals on little three-legged iron stands.

A man, in coarse brown breeches and shirt which was none too clean, with a crumpled stock about his neck, came to take the order. Talbot looked at him

very hard. This was the first time he had ever been in an ordinary, and he wanted to see all he could. In Norfolk he was never allowed to go into one, for Aunt Sally had said they were coarse, common places for rough men.

It made him feel very grown-up to be sitting waiting for his order. He had heard his friend say, "Ale for me and apples for the boy." This was just what Talbot wanted. He had eaten a fine dinner with Captain Daniel, but he always had room for an apple.

He thought he ought to say something to Mr. Johns, so he reached into his pocket and drew out a very large knife which he held up proudly.

"I have a knife," he said. "Captain Daniel gave it to me when I left the ship

to-day. I never had a knife before. Aunt Sally said I would cut myself. Men don't seem to think about that."

Indeed men felt differently from Aunt Sally about many things, it seemed to Talbot.

Just then the innkeeper brought the ale in a big stone pitcher, and with it a pewter mug and a large bowl of apples. He poured the ale and passed the fruit to the boy.

"Joe, has the mail come through yet?" Mr. Johns asked.

"No, sir. Not since Mr. Taylor rode by and took all of Mr. Huntington's, sir. That was more than ten days ago. They tell me the post has been held up by bad weather and washed-out roads up country."

"Old Jake takes his time, I think,—stops off to visit along the way," Mr. Johns said.

Talbot wasn't listening very carefully, for he was busy making little teeth-marks all around the top of his very red apple. Aunt Sally never let him do this, but his pleasant friend wouldn't say anything, he felt sure.

After a while Mr. Johns said to Talbot, "Sam will be wanting to start. There is still a long way between here and Myrtle Hill. These roads are none too good to travel after dark. There is one piece of a mile or so, straight through the woods, and it grows dark there soon. Let's be off, lad. Here, put an apple in each pocket. You may be hungry before supper-time."

Then he knocked his mug on the

table and Joe came back to take his pay. The two travellers went to look up Sam and Swift.

Sam was already on the box; Swift was holding the bridles of the front horses, and everything was ready for the start.

"Laws, Mr. Johns! I done feared you neber was comin'. Hyar I sit, frettin' foh to start, wid all dis way 'tween us an' home. I promised to get little Marse home foh his supper. Missus, she'll think he's los'."

"All right, Sam. Here we are."

"I'm sorry, Talbot, that I can't keep you company. I'm riding in the other direction," Mr. Johns said.

"I'd like to ride with Sam, if you please," Talbot said.

"Sam, let Master Talbot sit with you

on the box," the gentleman said, helping the little boy up to the high seat beside Sam. Mr. Johns told Talbot to hold tight, and then said good-bye to him.

Swift mounted one of the horses, and before Talbot could thank his friend for the apples, the horses started, and all he could do was wave his good-bye. As the road turned, he could see Mr. Johns waving his hat till he was out of sight behind the White Crow Ordinary.

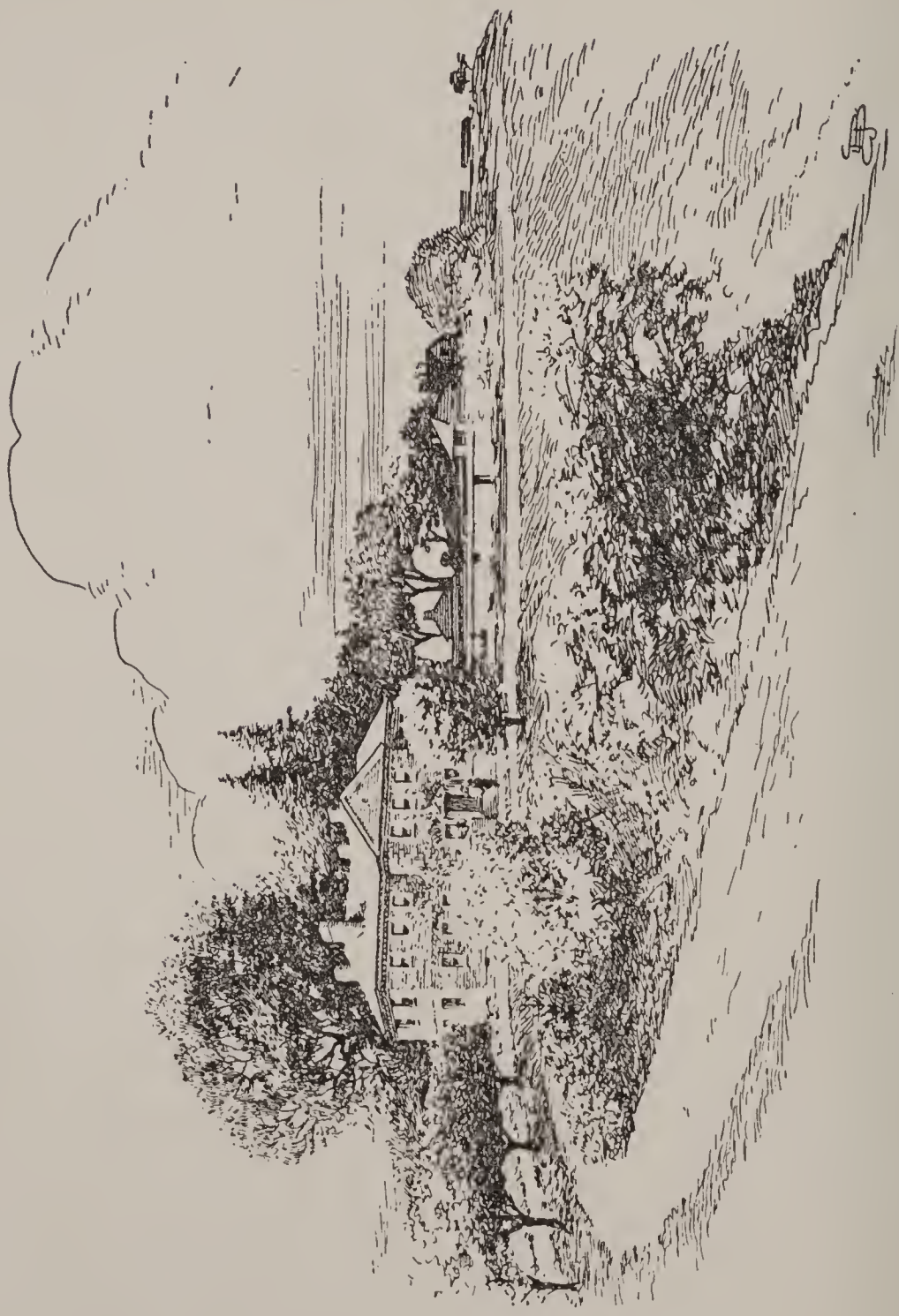
CHAPTER V

THE END OF THE JOURNEY

THE country seemed to be all hills. Once when they reached the top of a very steep one, Sam stopped the horses and Talbot had time to look around. The land looked like a quilt with many dark spots. He knew these were woods. There was not a house to be seen. Off to one side a river flowed like a silver ribbon. Sam told him the river was "Shallow Creek" and that they had to cross it before they got home.

"In a boat, Sam?"

"No, chile. We rides right through



"A RIGHT SMART FINE HOUSE"

it,—dat is, when the water ain't too high."

"Sam, are there any houses in Virginia?"

"Laws yes, Marse Talbot. Der is so. You can't see 'em, 'case dey is off de road,—hid in de trees. I'll show you a fine house soon. It ain't no finer than Marse George's, but hit am a right smart fine house."

It was growing quite dusk when Sam pointed out the house. Talbot could just see the roof through the trees and get a glimpse of the small houses near it, which Sam called the "quarters."

They crossed Shallow Creek soon after this and Talbot thought it was great fun to see the horses splash in the water. Swift turned around and said the water was nearly up to the hubs of the wheels.

That was really very high, and almost touched the bottom of the coach.

After this there was a long stretch of road through the woods. Talbot could feel the coolness, and it was dark before they were out in the open again. Once he heard an owl, and saw some little animal hurry away from the side of the road as the coach went along.

Soon Sam said, "Now we is a-comin' to our own place. Jes' a little piece mo', an' we'll pass de tobacco barns an' de mill."

But it was too dark to see anything. Talbot was very sleepy, and his eyes just would go shut. He was holding on tight, but he must have nodded, for Sam said:

"Wake up, little Marse! Dar is de Great House,—up yonder on de hill.

See de lights. Lawsy me, if I don' hyar de fiddle!"

And then before Talbot knew it, the coach stopped in front of the house and somebody's strong arms were lifting him off the box. They set him down inside of the big door and he blinked in the candle-light. He tried very hard to remember what Aunt Sally had told him to do as soon as he saw his uncle, but he wasn't at all sure which was his uncle, and he was too sleepy to remember what he was to say.

There were so many people about him. The gentlemen wore such gay clothes and white wigs. The candle-light made their great silver shoe-buckles and the buttons on their coats shine so. There were ladies, too. He thought them very beautiful in their

flowered silk sacks and bright quilted petticoats. These rustled when they walked. They had laughing, happy voices, that sounded like birds all talking at once. One of them had kissed him when he first came into the hall. He guessed this was his Aunt Margery Huntington.

Talbot just stood and looked at one and then another of the gay company, with his little beaver hat tucked under his arm. Then the lady who had greeted him clapped her hands and told the black boy, who bobbed up from nowhere, to fetch Mammy. Mammy came shuffling into the hall. She was big and black and very smiling. She dropped curtseys to all the ladies and gentlemen, and when she recognized one of them

she said, "Evenin', Miss Betty," or "Evenin', Marse Harry."

"Mammy," said her mistress, "this is Master Talbot Matthew Tucker. He

"THIS IS MASTER TALBOT"

wants his supper and bed. He has had a long, long trip and is very tired."

And to Talbot she said, "Good night, my child. Mammy will take care of you."

The lovely lady kissed him again on the top of his curls and tripped off with her gay companions, leaving Mammy and her charge alone in the great hall. Mammy took him into another room and between his nods and blinks, fed him warm milk and bread out of a silver bowl with a little handle on one side. He was too sleepy to mind being babied, and sat back in Mammy's broad lap and forgot all about how grown-up he had been at the Inn.

He must have been asleep before Mammy got him into the great bed, and he didn't know that his aunt and uncle had come up to look at him after the dance was over, and the candles in the hall were all put out.

CHAPTER VI

GETTING ACQUAINTED

WHEN Talbot opened his eyes next morning, he wasn't quite sure where he was. All he could see was a sunbeam dancing on the white ceiling. He looked around and found he was in the middle of a very large bed. It was a wonderfully soft bed, made out of feathers, he was sure, just like Aunt Sally's bed in Norfolk. He did not sleep in the great bed there, but in a little trundle-bed that was pulled out from under the great bed at night, and pushed back out of sight in the daytime. Talbot felt all grown-up

again, sleeping in a great bed instead of a trundle-bed. He wished Betsy and Polly could see him.

While he was thinking all this, he had been lying quite still, looking at the yel-

THE GREAT BED

low bed curtains and the beautiful quilt with great red tulips on it. Then he heard dogs barking and wondered where they were. He thought he

would like to get up to see, but he wasn't quite sure that he ought not to wait for some one to come. So he lay still a little longer. But the birds were singing out of doors and he wanted very much to see what was outside of the yellow curtains.

He tried one side of the bed, and put his head out to see. The floor was a long way off and he didn't see his clothes. There was only a straight little chair and a big chest of drawers against the wall. In Norfolk Aunt Sally had three little steps to put beside her bed, and Talbot wondered if there would be any here. He tried the other side. Sure enough, there were the three little steps on that side, and over on a chair, he saw his clothes. He climbed out of the great bed and looked around the room.

It was a very large room, he thought.

There were two windows and a fireplace. Under one of the windows was a big wooden chest with brass handles. Beside it was his own little brown leather trunk. In the corner was a stand with a bowl and pitcher of blue-and-white china. Over the stand, hung a mirror. Talbot could just see his fingers wiggle in it when he stood on tiptoe with his hands over his head.

Outside it looked very pleasant. Through one of the windows he could see the garden and beyond it some small white houses. Out of the other he could see a beautiful green lawn and lots of trees.

He thought he would like to go out. It would not take him long to dress. He went to his little trunk and had trouble with the strap, but he finally got it open.

There wasn't much in it. A few clean shifts, or shirts of fine linen, some fine woolen stockings and a pair of thread silk ones for best. These went with his morocco leather pumps with the silver buckles. He had some cambric handkerchiefs and fine linen neck-cloths. One of the neck-cloths had lace on the ends, and he always wore it with his best suit.

He was very proud of this best suit, which was of bright blue silk and had a flowered waistcoat. Aunt Sally had made it for him in the latest style. The cut of it was the same as a grown man's suit, for boys dressed like their fathers then. Tommy loved the silver buttons, and the lace ruffles at the wrists. The coat was full-skirted and had big cuffs and pocket-flaps and came down to his

knees. His breeches were tight, and fastened at the knees with silver buckles.

He wanted very much to wear this suit the first morning at his uncle's house, but thought perhaps he had better not. So he put on a clean shift and his every-day suit of brown kersey. When he was all dressed, he felt in his pocket to see if his precious knife was there, and then started out to see his new home.

Outside his room he felt a little frightened. No one seemed to be about and the doors upstairs were closed. Outside of one of the doors were two pairs of boots put out to be cleaned.

He started down the wide stairs on tiptoe. His shoes, which were the work of a travelling cobbler, were stiff and squeaky and made more noise than he

wished. There was a wide shining rail to the stairs that Talbot thought must have been made just for boys to slide down on. He wanted very much to try it at once.

Finding no one downstairs, he set out to look in the rooms. The doors were open, all except the front and back doors. These were shut tight and the great brass keys were turned in the locks. The light came in over the front door, through a window shaped like a fan. It made a pattern on the white walls of paneled woodwork. On the walls were candles in brass holders.

There were four open doors through which he might go to explore. He chose the nearest one and walked into a large room with four windows that reached to the floor and no furniture but

a few chairs and a musical instrument in one corner, which later Talbot learned was a spinet. The floor was highly polished and he thought it must be the room where they were having the dance last night. He walked all around it. The curtains were still drawn across the windows, and that kept it from being very light. On the walls were portraits of ladies and gentlemen. In one corner, on the floor, he found a little bow of blue ribbon. He guessed that one of the lovely ladies he had seen last night had dropped it, so he picked it up. The candles had burned very low and under one was a little pile of wax that had dripped down. It stuck tight to the floor. He thought his knife would help get it up, but fortunately for the polished floor his knife wouldn't open. There

was nothing more to see in that room, so he tried another.

Talbot was sure this was the dining-room. There was a long table and many high-backed chairs. On the side-board were silver and glass that shone in the morning sunshine. He didn't even know the names of all the things he saw. Over the sideboard hung a big round mirror in a gilt frame with can-dles on each side of it.

Down beside one of the chairs was something white, and Talbot picked it up. It was a wig. He had never seen a wig off any one's head before and he thought it very funny. He had wanted a wig to wear with his blue suit, but Aunt Sally had said he was too young. Some day, when he was grown up, she had promised to get him one. He won-

dered how he would look in a wig. Why not try this one on now?

He climbed up in a chair before the round mirror and put the wig on. It was much too big and poked out in front, and one side got caught on his ear. He was so busy getting it on that he did not notice a young man who came into the room. Talbot worked and worked to get the wig straight, and when he did it came away down over his eyes and he couldn't see himself. Just then a hearty laugh surprised him so that he nearly fell off the chair.

"So you want to wear a wig, do you? Mine is too big, I fear," said a nice voice.

The little boy standing on the chair with a white wig covering half of his face must have been very funny, for the man laughed again.

By this time Talbot had it off and saw a young man in a striped dressing-coat, and a small, close cap on his head.

"I am very sorry, sir. I didn't know it was your wig."

"That's all right, son. You see," he added, "last night after the ladies left us, we sat late, and I didn't remember until this morning that I had taken my wig off."

Talbot liked to have men talk to him in a grown-up way. He jumped down from the chair and handed the man his wig.

"My name is Talbot Matthew Tucker. I came last night to visit my uncle. What is your name, sir?"

"If you will let me call you Tommy Tucker, you may call me Jim."

"Why, that is what 'most every one

wants to call me." Talbot said in a disappointed voice. "How did you know?"

"Oh, it just seemed to me," Jim said, "that Tommy Tucker was about the right-size name for you."

"But I'll be eight years old soon," Talbot replied.

"Oh, you will fit your long name soon enough, Master Talbot, but won't you let me call you Tommy? I like it better," Jim said.

"Yes," Talbot answered, "if you want to very much." So it was decided, and while he stayed on the plantation they called him Tommy.

"What are you doing up so early, Tommy?" Jim asked.

"I woke up and wanted to see things," said Tommy. "I have already seen one

big, empty room and this one. I have two more rooms to go through."

"I see you mean to miss nothing, young man. I think this is much too nice a morning to stay indoors. If you will wait for me, we will go and explore outside together. You seem to have seen all there is inside."

"No, sir. There are two more rooms," said Tommy.

"Well, look about while I put on my boots and coat, and we will go out together." Then the friendly young man left Tommy alone.

Tommy went to the third door. In this room was a black fireplace that was very shiny. The logs were laid for a fire but had not been lighted. There was a great chair, with high back and winged sides covered with red leather,

beside the fireplace. There were many books in tall cases. But the wall-paper pleased Tommy most of all. There were pictures of ships sailing the high seas, all over it.

There was one more room, and the little boy thought he had better peep into it before Jim came down. This was a small room with one window. A tall desk reached nearly to the ceiling. The top part of this desk had glass doors made in little panes shaped like diamonds. There were green curtains back of them, and so he couldn't see what was inside. Down low it had two other doors. There were just two chairs in the room and Tommy didn't know what kind of a room it was. He would ask Jim later.

Just then he heard some one coming

down the steps and he hoped it was Jim. If the young man had not called, "Hello, Tommy Tucker," he would not have known him. His wig made him look very different, and so did his blue silk coat and nankeen breeches. Together they went out the big front door into the bright morning sunlight.

CHAPTER VII

OUTSIDE THE GREAT HOUSE

JIM and Tommy walked down a gravel path which led over the green lawn toward a group of small houses not far away. The dew was still on the grass and it sparkled in the sunlight. A bird sang in a lilac-bush. They stopped to listen, for it was a mocking-bird trying its sweetest songs.

Then the dogs began to bark.

"Are we going to see the dogs?" Tommy asked. "I heard them this morning early."

"Yes," Jim said. "I am going to show you the hounds. They are as fine

a pack as you will find in all Virginia. My father is very proud of them."

"Do they belong to my uncle?" said the little boy.

"Yes, of course."

Tommy was quiet as they walked along. He was thinking.

"Then you are my cousin, aren't you, Jim?"

"Of course, lad. Didn't you know it?"

"No," said Tommy. "You didn't tell me any name but 'Jim.' How could I know?"

"Well, we are cousins, and I like it very well," said Jim.

By this time the two of them were getting close to the kennels where the dogs were kept. The hounds set up a great barking as they came near.

Tommy was just a little frightened, but Jim told him they couldn't get out and he needn't mind the noise.

As they passed the coach-house, Tommy saw Sam. He was not dressed up in the gay livery he wore when driving, but was in striped cotton breeches, a coarse linen shirt, and a big leather apron.

"Mornin', Marse James. Mornin', little Marse. How is you dis mornin' after yo' long trip yes'erday?" Sam asked with a broad grin on his black face.

"Master Talbot is getting acquainted. We have come to look at the pack. They seem restless this morning," Jim said.

"Yes, suh. Dey's pinin' foh a run, suh," Sam replied.

Jim and Tommy went up to the en-

"YOU FELLOWS WANT A RUN, DON'T YOU?"

closure to look at the dogs. Jim called them by name and spoke a word to each one.

"Yes, you fellows want a run, don't you?" he said to them. "You'll have to wait for cold weather, I'm afraid."

"Nothing can compare with fox-hunting for sport," he said to Tommy. "Some day, when you are older, you will know all about it. I'll bring you the tail from the first hunt," he boasted, and then added "if I have any luck."

"Thank you, sir," said Tommy.

"Don't you think you could call your cousin by his name?" asked Jim. "Save the 'sir' for father. I like just Jim."

"So do I, Jim," Tommy answered.

"Let's go look at the horses next," Jim said.

The stable where Mr. Huntington

kept his fine horses, his racers and hunters and coach-horses, was just a little way from the kennels. They walked slowly over to it and went in through the big doors.

There were several black boys doing chores about the stalls. Jim called for David, who was in charge of the stable. He was a white man, and later on Tommy learned that he was a bonded servant who was working out his time and looking forward to freedom.

"David, I have brought my cousin Master Talbot down to see our horses," said Jim. "We shall have to teach him to ride and make a first-class horseman out of him. How is my mare this morning?" Jim asked David.

"Doing well, sir. I walked her out this morning and she scarcely limps."

"What happened to her?" Tommy asked.

"I was riding her hard across the fields last week, to get in ahead of a storm, and she stepped into a hole and lamed a front leg. David has fixed her up for me and I'll be riding her soon, I hope."

"Tommy, I want you to see the fastest horse in the country," Jim said. "Last month she won all the honors at the Old Field Track where the races were held. Isn't she a beauty?"

"What is her name?" Tommy asked, as he reached up to pet her velvety nose.

"Mother named her 'Dreamer' when she was just a filly. She had such gentle, dreamy, brown eyes, mother said. But she is no dreamer on the tracks. You ought to have seen her run, Tommy. My! we were proud. Let's be going,

now. Perhaps we can see the garden before it is time for breakfast," Jim said.

The two then went out between the rows of stalls, each of which held a beautiful, well-cared-for horse. Jim knew them all by name, and patted and spoke to them in his friendly way.

When they passed the coach-house again, Sam had the great green coach outside, washing the dust and mud from the wheels and polishing it, so that it shone like new.

They went up a path toward the garden, and Tommy had his first real view of the Great House of Myrtle Hill Plantation. It was built of red brick with white wooden trimmings and sat in the pleasantest way on the green lawn among tulip, oak, and chestnut trees. The driveway circled around in front of

the door on the land side of the house.

Lilac-bushes and smaller shrubs were planted around the buildings. There were two great chimneys of brick at either end of the Great House. These made fireplaces possible in every room. Open fires were the only means of heating the Great House. The smaller buildings near by, Jim told Tommy, were the kitchen, the smoke-house, the store-room and the spring-house. He promised to show them to him later on.

At each side of the house was a garden, closed in by a low brick wall. Nearest them was the vegetable garden, and on the other end was the flower garden. They saw an old negro working in the trim beds.

Jim called, "Good morning, Uncle Isaac. How are your crops?"

"Better dan I is, Marse James. Dis ole man am moughty po'ly, thank de Lawd."

"Uncle Isaac always says that, Tommy. But he is a very old man. Father took him out of the fields last year to let him work in Mother's garden, because he is too feeble for heavy work."

They walked around by the kitchen and Jim said he smelled breakfast. Just then Mammy came out of the kitchen. When she saw the two, she threw her hands over her turbaned head and called out:

"Ah mought a-knowed Marse Jim would be up to somepin. Hyah I bin lookin', an' lookin' foh little Marse, and Marse Jim done took him out. Laws, Honey, Ah hab worrit mahself. Ah goes into little Marse's room 'spectin' to

wake him up. Ah looks in 'tween de curtins, an' mah chile am done gone. Ole Mammy she wuz skeered to move. Den she think, 'Little Marse he play a trick on Mammy, like Marse Jim an' Marse Henry useter do.' So Ah 'pears to be lookin', 'spectin' a little voice to call out, Boo! at Ole Mammy, tryin' to make her jump. An' Ah don' hear no soun'. Den Ah looks foh his clo's."

Jim and Tommy were laughing now, but poor Mammy had really thought that some one had carried off her "chile," clothes and all, and she didn't think it funny.

"Mammy, did you think the ha'nts' had taken him?" Jim asked, still laughing.

"You go 'long, Marse Jim. Stop dat teasin' yo' old Mammy. She done

promus her Missus to take keer ob little Marse and she gwine ter do hit. Go 'long to yo' brekfus, both you chilluns!"

CHAPTER VIII

HELPING

NOT many weeks went by before Tommy Tucker felt very much at home in the Great House, with his cousins. They were all "grown-ups" to him, though none of them was so very old. There were four Huntington cousins, Henry, Lucy, Margaret, and Jim.

The oldest of his cousins, Henry, was not at home. He had gone to England to school and would not come back to Virginia until his studies were finished. In the ball-room hung a beautiful new portrait of Henry in a plum-colored

silk suit with lace ruffles at his neck and wrists. He wore a white wig which curled about his face, and Tommy thought he looked very handsome and pleasant.

Jim did not care for books and studies, so his father was teaching him to manage the great plantation. There was much to be done. The slaves needed to be watched; the tobacco crops had to be harvested at the proper time, and the packing and shipping arranged for; the wheat had to be milled and the flour sold. All of this the planter planned for, and saw that his plans were carried out.

Usually before breakfast, Mr. Huntington and Jim rode over the plantation. After breakfast they met in the little room which Tommy had not recognized

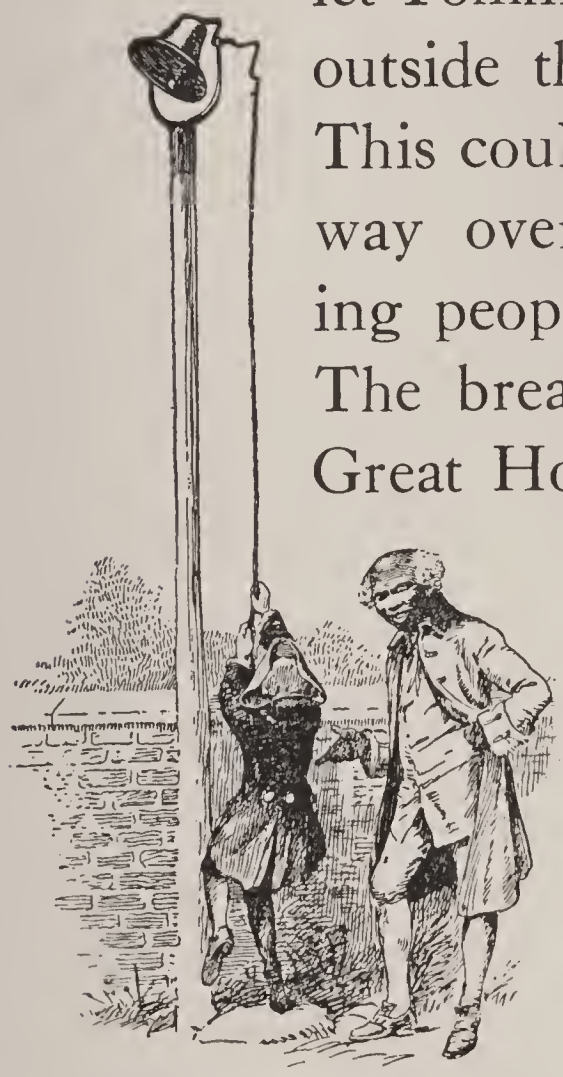
that first morning. There they talked over with Mr. Taylor, the overseer, the plans for harvesting and marketing the crops.

Jim did not like this part of his duty, but he knew it had to be done. Sometimes Tommy was allowed to sit in the office beside the great desk while Jim wrote figures in a big book. When a page was filled, Jim would let him shake the sand over it to dry the ink. Tommy called this "keeping accounts," and felt very proud to have a share in such important work.

The little boy was looking forward to the time when he could ride around the plantation with his uncle and cousin on their morning trips of inspection. Jim had promised to take him some day

soon, and Tommy could hardly wait for the time.

Many mornings, Moses, the butler, let Tommy ring the big bell outside the carpenter-shop. This could be heard a long way over the fields, calling people in to breakfast. The breakfast hour at the Great House was not until between nine and ten o'clock, but the whole household was up and at work long before that.



THE BIG BELL

Mistress Huntington was out in her garden on fair days walking among

her flowers, stooping here and there to nip a faded blossom, digging about the roots of some rare plants, or fastening up a drooping head of bloom. Tommy went with her some mornings and carried a big flat basket in which his aunt put the flowers she cut to be taken to the house.

In true Colonial fashion, Mistress Huntington protected her skin from the morning sun by a mask of green silk which she wore under her wide gypsy straw hat. On her hands were cotton mitts which covered her arms to the elbow. Her morning dress was a sack of gay chintz over a quilted damask petticoat, with a long muslin apron. If the dew was heavy, she wore pattens over her thin calamanco shoes. For often she went from the flower garden

through the grass, down the hill to the spring-house, to see that the place was clean and in order. One day Tommy went with his aunt to see the spring-house.

This little house had two parts, and only one of these could be called a room. The walls and floor of this part were built of stone. A big wooden table stood at one side. It was scrubbed very white, and on it were stone jars and shallow wooden trays called "skeels." These were for the milk to stand in so that the cream might rise. They, too, had been scrubbed nearly white. Several long-handled dippers with flat round bowls, called "skippets," hung above the table and also butter-paddles whittled out of red cherry wood. A big churn stood in one corner. A rack

where clean linen cloths hung was in the other, and there was one high stool.

"Carrie keeps her dairy-room clean, and it should be so if our milk and butter are to be good," Mistress Huntington said. "Tommy, would you like to look into the other part and see how we keep things cool, even in the hottest weather?"

She opened the door and told Tommy to look in. It was so dark that at first he couldn't see anything, but he heard the sound of water trickling. There were two little windows up near the roof, and by and by he could see jars covered over with cloths, standing in the black, cool water, which ran in at one side of the house and out the other. There was a little wooden bridge across the water, but Aunt Margery wouldn't

let him walk on it She was afraid that he might fall into the water, and perhaps upset a jar of milk. At one side stood crocks of milk, cream, butter, and cheese and on the other, racks for dishes of delicate foods like jellies, which must be kept cool in hot weather. No other foods were put in the dairy-house.

"Carrie has promised to let me churn some day, if I am good," Tommy said.

His aunt smiled. He had already told her about the garden that Ben, the gardener, had promised he could have all by himself. Mistress Huntington suspected that the happy little boy had won some such promise from every one on the place.

As they went up the hill toward the Great House, they passed the little schoolroom that had been built when

Henry and Jim were small boys. Tommy stood on tiptoe and looked through a window now covered with cobwebs. He could just see into the bare little room with its rough benches and tables. Here for years they worked with their tutor. Several boys from neighboring plantations had at one time joined them in their studies. Margaret and Lucy studied for a while, too. They had learned to read and write and do simple sums, but for girls, in those days, it was more important to be able to dance and to play on the spinet or harpsichord. Their mother herself taught them to embroider and sew. Now that the girls were growing up, they could help her with her many duties, too.

Margaret was teaching several of the young negro women to sew coarse linen

and cotton stuffs into the breeches for the little negroes. Lucy was not clever with her needle, so she was learning to weave and spin that she might direct the weavers and spinners who made cloth for the servants' clothes.

The girls were both young and gay. Their mother did not keep them too closely tied to tasks. Often for several days at a time they were off for a dancing-party at a neighbor's plantation, and quite as often entertained such a party at home.

Aunt Margery was teaching Tommy to make his letters. He wanted very much to be able to write to Aunt Sally and Uncle Matthew, and to his mother and father and the twins. There was so much he might tell. Each day he worked hard over his "lessons," as he

called them. Jim found an old slate for him. He practised T's and M's and b's and w's in the roadway, too, making them very large with a pointed stick. He had nearly learned to write his name.

One day Tommy discovered that sawdust in the carpenter-shop was very good to write in. He brought it from the shop by handfuls and spread it all over the front porch. In it he made as many letters as he could remember, and succeeded at last in writing his name. He proudly went for his Aunt Margery to show her what he had done. He was very much surprised when she didn't think the writing good, and scolded him for bringing trash on the porch.

When Tommy and his Aunt Margery came back to the Great House after visiting the spring-house they heard the

tinkling sound of the spinet and sweet girls' voices singing. Tommy ran to the ball-room door and waved to his cousins, who stopped their singing and asked him to come in. Aunt Margery bade him not to, as his feet were wet and would take the polish off the floor. "Besides," Aunt Margery said, "the girls must finish their practice." So he kept on through the house and out toward the kitchen to see if he could beg a bite to eat.

Tommy was always very hungry before meal-time came around. By noontime, almost any day, he had forgotten his hearty morning meal of eggs and crisp bacon and batter bread. He never tried to keep count of the number of beaten biscuits he ate with golden honey, and washed down with milk. Somehow

it was all shaken down as he ran busily about helping in one place or another. This was the way Dinah explained it to him when he asked for a bite before dinner-time.

Mistress Huntington was accustomed to having a glass of cordial and a biscuit when she returned to the Great House after her morning tour of inspection. Martha, the little black girl who ran her mistress's errands and served her in many ways, was allowed to carry this refreshment. It was Martha's privilege, when her mistress finished, to empty the glass or eat what remained of the biscuit or cake. This was a treat, for the servants' fare was plain. The delicacies of the Great House table seldom reached the "quarters," or even the table of the house-servants.

Tommy had friends in every one of the many little houses where the occupations of the plantations were carried on. He liked to visit them all. Just as his elders had their daily tasks, going about watching the work in the fields, the spinning, weaving, mending, shoemaking, and gardening, so Tommy made his daily rounds, sometimes with his aunt or uncle, sometimes alone.

The dark-skinned foreign man, who cobbled shoes and taught two young negro men to make shoes and mend them, was his special friend. Tommy couldn't always understand what Gigo said to him, but it didn't matter. They only laughed when they got mixed up with the words. Gigo had come over on a ship from Spain, and because he could make shoes, Mr. Huntington had

bought his time for three years. At the end of that time Gigo would be free and could go about from plantation to plantation, making shoes and earning money for himself. Tommy thought he should like to be a shoemaker and travel about the colony with Gigo.

In the carpenter-shop all the workers were negroes. On clear days they were out about the plantation, repairing the many wooden buildings, the slave quarters, or building the great sheds for the tobacco.

On rainy days they worked in the shop, making tool-handles and rough furniture or dishes for the "quarters." Some of the men made the great hogsheads in which the tobacco was packed for shipping. Tommy brought out his knife, and one of the carpenters was

teaching him how to whittle. Some day he hoped to make a butter-paddle to give to Carrie because she let him help churn.

There was very much to see and do, for work went on all the while except Sundays. Tommy was so busy that he hardly ever minded playing alone. He liked to "help," as he called it, and everybody loved him and never minded a bit having him ask questions, or stopping to help him learn to be a shoemaker, or a carpenter, or anything else he wanted to be.

As Mammy said, "It sho does do de ole place good ter hab a chile about, hoppin' aroun' lak a little bird, lookin' foh crumbs."

CHAPTER IX

A VISIT TO THE "QUARTERS"

OFTEN when Tommy Tucker went to visit the hounds and the horses, he saw Sam and Swift. Swift was not much older than Tommy and was Mammy's grandson. When his chores were done, he was allowed to come up to the Great House to play with his "lil' Marse," as he called Tommy.

They had a favorite spot to which they often went to play, half-way down the long, sloping, green lawn which led to the river. It was here that the "ha-ha" wall ran. This was built of brick.

The top was level with the lawn and it dropped about three feet to make a kind of terrace. The wall was meant to keep the sheep and cattle from getting up close to the house, when they were

THE "HA-HA" WALL

turned out to crop the grass on the lower lawn. It made a perfect barrier and could not be seen from the house.

The two little boys made a gay spot

of color against the green lawn as they sat swinging their feet over the "ha-ha" wall. The little black boy with shining eyes, and white teeth, was dressed in red striped osnaburg. His feet and legs were bare, as was his kinky black head. Close beside him sat his little master in nankeen breeches, a blue gingham coat, and a ruffled shirt. On his feet were blue stockings and silver-buckled shoes.

Tommy was telling Swift about the wonderful fairs held in Norfolk. You would have thought he had seen them a dozen times. Swift's eyes grew bigger and brighter as he listened to the tale of the slippery pole, with the hat on top, and the barrel-races and the greased pigs.

Swift said, "Marse Talbot, if Ah kin

git de boys at de 'quarters' to help me catch one ob de lil' pigs down in de sty, why can't we hab a Fair right hyar on de place?"

"Oh, Swift," Tommy replied, "do you think we could? If you get the pig, I'll save a cake from my supper for a prize."

"How kin we git hits tail shaved and greased?" Swift asked.

"Oh, Jim will help us, I know he will," Tommy answered.

So they planned for a Fair.

Then Swift told Tommy about a 'possum hunt the "quarter" negroes had had the night before. One of the men had caught a young 'possum before the dogs got it, and had brought it home to fatten up for the stew-pot.

"Hab you ever eat a fat juicy 'possum, Marse Talbot?" the little black boy asked.

Tommy said he hadn't, and Swift rolled his eyes until only the whites showed, and grinned until his teeth seemed to reach almost from ear to ear.

"It am sho' good eatin', Marse Talbot; it sho' am." And indeed a 'possum stew with "taters" was a great treat to the negroes, who lived for the most part on the "hog and hominy" which was given them by the planters. Some of the negroes had little gardens where they raised vegetables, and a few were allowed to keep chickens. Coarse cornmeal from the plantation mill, and molasses, which was used for sweetening, were also supplied. Fruit taken from the master's trees and watermelons from

his fields helped out their diet, and Mr. Huntington did not try to stop such small thefts.

"I wish I could see the 'possum before he is cooked," Tommy said. "Could you bring him up to the Great House after dinner?"

"Lawsy no, Marse Talbot. He bites. Dey hab him in a cage. He jes' hangs dar by his tail an' sleeps an' sleeps, but if I war to tech him, he'd wake up quick enough."

"Perhaps if I asked, I could go to see the 'possum. Let's go, Swift, and see if we can find any one to ask," Tommy said.

The two jumped up and ran toward the house. Swift was not allowed inside the Great House, so Tommy ran on ahead to hunt for some one who

could give him permission to visit the "quarters."

Jim and the two girls had gone off to spend the day at the next plantation, where the dancing-master was giving lessons. Uncle George had gone to sit at the County Court, and Tommy had no idea where his aunt was. She was not in the Great House. There were so many places where she might be. Just as he was deciding whether to begin at the smoke-house or the dairy to look for her, Mammy came along up the path from the wash-house.

Tommy and Swift ran to meet her. "Oh, Mammy," Tommy called, "I want to go see the 'possum!"

"What 'possum, chile?" Mammy asked.

"Swift says they caught a 'possum last

night and have it in a cage down at the 'quarters.' Do you think Aunty will let me go to see it?" he begged.

"Missus am in de sto'-house, Dinah says, makin' out a lis' of things she wants ter git when de ship come. Ah hyar dem say it am expected soon, an' de lis' mus' be ready foh to carry back," Tommy had already started on a run toward the store-house and Swift was running after him.

Mammy called to Swift, "Come back hyar, you rascal. Don' you know 'nough to keep out from wha' you ain't s'pose' to be?"

Tommy found his aunt busy. She was making a list of the spices, tea, coffee, seasonings, and flavorings that would be needed by the time the ship came in. A negro girl was helping by

lifting down the tin boxes and jars from their shelves and opening them for her mistress to look into. Another girl was working with a stone pestle and mortar grinding cocoa beans into fine powder. The air was full of the odor of chocolate when Tommy came in. He liked very much to pound the chocolate for his aunt, but just now the 'possum was more interesting than anything else.

"Aunty," he said, a little out of breath from running, "may I go see a 'possum, a real live 'possum that hangs by his tail?"

"Where is he, honey child?" his aunt asked.

The little negro girl grinned over her work. She knew about the 'possum, too.

"Down at the 'quarters,' Aunty.

Down near Mammy's cabin. May I go?" he begged.

Mistress Huntington was very busy, so she said, "Yes, if Mammy goes with you. Stay only a little while, and don't be late for dinner."

Tommy was anxious to go as soon as he heard the "yes." He did wait, though, to thank his aunt and make a little bow with one hand behind his back, as he had seen his uncle do when he left a room where there were ladies.

Outside he found Swift waiting.

"I'm going! I'm going! Where is Mammy? She has to go with us."

Swift was just a little sorry about this. He wanted to show his "lil' Marse" all the sights himself, and Mammy always wanted to do the talking when she was along.

The two raced up the path to find Mammy. She had stopped in the kitchen to see Dinah.

"Oh, Mammy, come on. Aunty says to go with me to the 'quarters.' "

"Lawsy, chile. Has Mammy got to go all dat piece in dis hot sun, when she hab de misery in her back, jes so you kin see a 'possum?"

"Mammy, I want to see where you live, too," Tommy said, with a winning smile.

"Go long, chile, I lives hyar. I ain't no 'quarters' nigger."

But really Mammy spent a good part of her time at the little cabin where her family lived. She liked to keep an eye on them and sit in the doorway and direct the coming and going of her children and grandchildren.

Tommy pulled her out of the kitchen and the fat old woman started off with the two boys running ahead of her, down the road toward the "quarters."

They didn't have to go far before they could see the little cabins. They were in rows on both sides of the road. Most of them were built of split logs, chinked with mud and had low sloping roofs. A few had little gardens in front, and swarms of pickaninnies played about. Their only clothes were coarse white shifts, not very clean. Their shiny black arms and legs were bare. They romped about in the sun like so many puppies or kittens. Outside of several cabins, old gray-headed negroes, no longer able to work, sat dozing in the sun.

One old man was making brooms of

sedge-grass which grew in the "old fields." He was proud of these brooms which were used as hearth-brooms for the many fireplaces of the Great House. Swift said he knew how to make brooms, too, and promised to show Tommy how.

Mammy stopped at one of the cabins to ask after a sick child and Tommy and Swift ran ahead to see the 'possum. They found the little animal hanging to the limb of a small tree, which had been stuck in the shady corner of a rail fence and a rough cage built around it. A ring of black children stood watching and waiting for the 'possum to do something beside hang upside down by its smooth tail. They dared not poke it, as one of the men had been bitten when the 'possum was put in the cage.

They all moved back when Tommy

and Swift came up. Swift was feeling very important and didn't notice any of his friends, who were there.

"Dar he is, Marse Talbot," Swift said.

THE 'POSSUM

"Does he always stay like that?" Tommy asked.

"Ah ain't nebber seen him no other way," Swift answered.

"What does he eat?" Tommy wanted to know.

"Ah don' know. He mus' eat somepin, kase dey is goin' to fatten him up an' den eat him."

Tommy looked and looked at the quiet little animal with his round furry body and pointed nose, hanging there as though he would never do anything else. The "quarters" children found the little boy from the Great House more interesting than the 'possum just then, and stood and looked at Tommy in silence.

Mammy came up, and said, "If you wants to see whar I live, come right up dis way, Marse Talbot." The 'possum didn't show any signs of stirring, so Talbot went along with Mammy.

Mammy's cabin had a little fence

around it and some vines growing up by the door. She went in first and then asked Tommy to come in.

Coming in out of the sunshine the cabin's one room seemed dark, and indeed the few windows were too small to let in much light. Smoke from the fireplace had made the rafters nearly black. There was very little furniture, only a rough table, a bench or two, and a kind of bed in one corner. Under one window was a chest of drawers. This was Mammy's pride. On top of the chest stood two brass candlesticks and a wooden bowl. A few pewter cups and wooden plates were on a shelf above. The only china was a broken-topped pitcher and a cracked dish which had been discarded at the Great House. Over the fire hung an iron pot in which

something was cooking. A three-legged black kettle stood near the coals. A number of pots and pans hung about the fireplace.

"Where do all the people sleep, Mammy?" Tommy asked, as he looked around.

"The chilluns roll up in dey kivers, 'mos' anywhere, and der mammy and daddy sleeps dah in de corner," she answered, pointing to the one bed of rough hewn wood. Mammy slept over the wash-house, so there didn't have to be a place for her.

The "quarters" children played out of doors all day on pleasant days, and the men and women worked at the Great House or about the stables or gardens. At night they came home tired. After their evening meal, they sat about the

doorsteps until dark, singing and talking. The young people played games and danced to fiddle tunes.

The field negroes lived in other quarters, just like these, but farther off, nearer the tobacco fields where they worked.

"Tain't pretty like de Great House, is it Marse Talbot? But it am good enough foh us," the old woman said. "Marse Huntington am good to his black people. If we is faithful an' works, he treats us well. He don't 'low no man fer to 'buse his people, an' I only knows of one nigger dat he had to sell, an' he was a no-'count un."

CHAPTER X

A TRIP TO THE FIELDS

ONE morning early, Tommy Tucker was standing on the steps of the Great House waiting for his uncle and Jim. This was the day they were to take him to the fields. It was a beautiful clear morning with a little autumn coolness in the air.

The master of the house was riding out to see his tobacco fields, for it was nearly time for the harvesting of the crop. So much depended on the tobacco. Tommy had learned that it was tobacco that bought the gay clothes and fine furnishings which came over

on the ship from London. Tobacco paid for the beautiful new horse that Mr. Huntington had ridden home from the County Court. A good crop meant more silver for the sideboard in the dining-room and more fine books for his uncle's library. He had heard his uncle say, just the other day, that if the tobacco crop was good, he would have a famous portrait-painter come to paint pictures of the whole family. And perhaps when winter came, they might all go to Williamsburg for the gay assemblies and the plays which were held there every year. So many of the things which made life on the plantation pleasant depended upon the tobacco crop. Tommy was very anxious to see this wonderful plant.

It seemed to him a long time before

Swift brought two beautiful horses up to the steps. Even then his uncle and Jim didn't come. But he had Swift to talk to now and the horses to pet. Tommy hoped he was going to ride behind Jim on the brown mare.

Swift was having a hard time holding the spirited horses. To steady them, he had to walk them around the big grassy circle in front of the house. Tommy thought it safer to stay right on the steps, to make sure he wouldn't miss his uncle, so he sat on the top one to wait and told Swift about his pet goose back in Norfolk whenever he came near the porch.

By and by Jim and his father came out. They were both dressed for riding. The silver buttons on their blue duffel coats shone in the sun, and their neat,

smooth wigs were tied in queues with black ribbon bows. Their ruffled shirts were starched and white, and they looked as trim and fresh as the morning.

"What a glorious day!" the planter said, as he looked out over the fields to the woods beyond.

"Good morning, Tommy," said Jim, who noticed the little fellow on the steps.

"You are out early, aren't you?" his Uncle George added.

"Don't you remember, sir, this is the day you promised to take me to the fields?" Tommy reminded him.

"Sure enough, it is," Jim answered. "He didn't want to get left behind, so he came down in good time."

"All right, lad. We'll show you the tobacco fields. Mr. Taylor tells me the

crop is ripening and I want to look it over before I give orders to cut it," Mr. Huntington said.

Just then Joe, a serving-man, in blue jacket and white breeches, spotless white stockings, and shoes with large buckles, came out from the house with a tray, on which were two tall glasses filled with a cold drink. The Master always had his mint julep before he rode to the fields.

"Ah, that's the drink," the planter said, as Joe served his master and Jim and stood aside to wait for the glasses to be emptied.

"But come along now. We must be off."

The servant took the emptied glasses, bowed to his master, and stood watching the two men and the little boy mount the horses and start. Tommy was helped

up behind Jim just as he had hoped, and away they rode toward the fields.

They passed by the "quarters" where the negroes stopped what they were doing and bowed to their master as he passed. Mr. Huntington returned the salute in a kindly way and Tommy waved to the pickaninnies who climbed up on the fence to watch them pass.

Soon they were out of sight of the Great House and trotting along a rough dirt road. They passed a big cornfield where the shocks were stacked together waiting for the husking.

Every year the negroes had a great festival over the corn-husking. They worked and sang and made merry in the barn as they stored away the golden ears, which were to feed the horses and cattle through the winter months.

Then the riders passed great fields where the sedge-grass grew high. Jim said these were the "old fields" where tobacco was planted until the land became too poor to raise any more crops.

On the edge of this clearing there was a scattered group of small log cabins. Here the field negroes lived. Jim pointed out the overseer's house on a hill, in a clump of trees. They called this "Dog Creek Farm," because the rolling-road, from the tobacco sheds down to Dog Creek, ran past the overseer's house. Tobacco was the only crop raised on Dog Creek Farm.

Tommy soon had his first glimpse of growing tobacco. The plants were set out in rows, about four feet apart. These plants grew quite tall and sometimes had as many as ten or twelve big,

coarse, green leaves growing straight out from the stalks. At the top of each stalk grew a large, bell-shaped, pinkish flower, but these were nipped off as soon

THE TOBACCO FIELDS

as they appeared. This is called "topping" the tobacco. It makes the leaves grow better. When tobacco begins to ripen and is ready to cut, the leaves turn a lighter green and become mottled, with light-colored spots.

At the first field, the planter got down from his horse and walked in among the plants. Tommy saw him take a leaf in

his hand and fold it between his fingers. Jim said that the tobacco was ripe if the leaf snapped when he did this.

They rode for quite a while along the road between the tobacco fields. Then they came to several long, airy sheds where the tobacco was brought to be dried.

Here some negroes were working, getting everything ready for the crop which was soon to be brought in. Jim got down from his horse to inspect the inside of the sheds and took Tommy with him. The sheds were quite empty, save for great hogsheads and piles of long sticks on the floor. These were the sticks on which the tobacco stalks were hung to dry.

They were laid across the rafters and allowed to hang there until the time

came to take the withered tobacco down to be stemmed. Then the leaves were tied up in bundles and packed in great hogsheads, where the tobacco was prized or pressed down. These huge hogsheads held as much as eleven hundred pounds and were hauled by horses or slaves down the rolling-roads to the "rolling-houses" or warehouses. There the hogsheads were stored until a ship came to carry the tobacco to the London merchant, or until it was sold and sent to buyers in the other colonies.

While Jim was speaking to the negroes about things he wanted done, Tommy ran about looking at everything. He climbed into one of the huge hogsheads which was standing near a pile of lumber. It was so deep that he couldn't see over the top. Tommy was a little

frightened and yelled loudly for Jim to come and get him out. Then he found a stick, which was just the right length

IN THE HOGSHEAD

for a sword. He asked one of the negroes to give him some rope to tie it around his waist. Tommy was very cross when Jim made him put the stick

down before they remounted the horse.

Mr. Huntington had ridden ahead to catch up with the overseer and give his orders about cutting the tobacco in the fields they had just passed. Jim and Tommy were to follow him, so they rode on passed other fields of tobacco. Jim said these were not ripe yet. The plants here had not been set out as soon as those in the first field. A dry spell had delayed the transplanting of the tobacco.

"They plant tobacco seeds," Jim told Tommy, "in special beds covered with tobacco cloth. When the seedlings are six to ten weeks old, they are transplanted into the fields. Each little plant is set out by hand. The ground must be wet, so we wait until after a shower to transplant. The only way water can be brought to the fields is in

barrels from the creek, so we always wait for wet weather if we can."

Tommy said he thought tobacco was a lot of trouble to raise. Jim said, "It does take skill and trouble in the right management of it to make the crop a success. And sometimes after we have done all we can, the cutworms spoil the leaves or the dampness makes them mould and decay in the sheds. If the crop is small, we are poor. Mother and the girls can't have new clothes and jewels, and Father can't buy new land."

"But there is always plenty to eat," he went on to say. "The river is full of fish and the woods are full of game."

"Do you ever go 'possum-hunting?" Talbot asked.

"That's not a gentleman's sport," Jim replied. "The negroes do that. We

hunt deer for food, and for sport, gentlemen have fox-hunting and horse-racing."

"But you like cock-fights, and the negroes like them, too. I heard black Sam say the 'quarter' negroes were going to a cock-fight at Henry's Ferry, just last week. And I heard Uncle George say, too, that he won a pound from Mr. Smith on a cock-fight when he went up to the County Court."

"Yes," Jim admitted. "Every man, black or white, likes a good cock-fight."

"I shouldn't," Tommy said, though he wasn't quite sure what a cock-fight was like.

Jim laughed at him and said, "Just wait till you grow up."

They were riding now through a piece of wooded land and the road was as nar-

row as a path. Suddenly there was a great flapping of wings, and a wild turkey flew off into the brush, just in front of them. The horse shied and Tommy had to hold tightly.

"I wish I had my gun with me," Jim said. "We would have had good eating for supper. Last year I brought in the first wild turkey of the season," he told Tommy. "And I shot him in this very same patch of woods."

As they talked, they were circling around to the Great House. They passed two big orchards where the apples grew, from which the cider was made. Jim pointed out the little house where the cider-press stood. Tommy wanted to stop and see how it worked, but Jim said they wouldn't be back in time for breakfast if they didn't keep go-

ing. There were peach, plum, and cherry orchards, too.

When they came to the old stone mill, with its big water-wheel turning slowly, they saw Mr. Huntington's horse. All the corn-meal and flour for use on the plantation was ground here. Sometimes there was more than enough flour for the Great House. This was shipped away in exchange for sugar from the West Indies.

Tommy wanted to go into the mill to see how the flour was ground. Jim said, "No, you'll only get yourself covered with dust, and besides the miller is busy with Father and hasn't any time to be bothered with boys."

Tommy thought Jim very cross this morning but he said nothing about it. They waited until Mr. Huntington

came out. Tommy got down and watched the great wheel going slowly round and round, turning the stones, which ground the grain into flour.

When Mr. Huntington came out, they rode together back to the Great House. Just before they came in sight of the house, they passed some swampy land where the ground was covered with vines having shiny dark green leaves. Jim said this was myrtle. The vines bore little berries. These were boiled, and candles made from the wax. Every year the "quarters" children picked the myrtle berries. Then there was a candle-making bee to supply the Great House with the pretty green candles, which gave forth a fragrant odor as they burned.

"Did they name the plantation Myrtle

Hill because there are so many berries here?" Tommy asked.

"Yes," Jim said, "that is just the reason."

When they reached home they found the post had come and left letters. There was one for Tommy from his Aunt Sally. This was the very first letter he had ever received. He was so excited that he could hardly wait for some one to read it to him.

But it was breakfast-time, so Tommy had to be patient. The meal seemed long and every one ate so slowly. Tommy finished in a hurry and then had to sit and wait for the others. The time seemed very long indeed.

When every one had finished Aunt Margery pushed back her chair and took Tommy's letter from the bag which

hung at her waist. Lucy and Margaret and even Jim and Uncle George stopped talking to listen. Aunt Margery let Tommy break the big red seal on the back of his letter. Then she read it to him as he leaned over the arm of her chair.

"To my nephew
Talbot Matthew Tucker,
Myrtle Hill Plantation,
in care of George Huntington, Esq.

"Dear Talbot:

"It seems a long time since you left Norfolk. We all miss you, especially Solomon, the goose. We have kept her in the garden all summer. Several times she has been very naughty. She gets into the flower-beds and once she snapped off nearly all the blossoms from my feverfew.

"I have missed your help in the gar-

den. The weeds grew fast and Uncle Solomon and I have worked hard to keep them out of the beds.

"The Fair was held last week and Uncle Matthew wished you were here to go with him. I went with him just once. The crowd was rough and very noisy but you would have loved it all. I saw four young men tied up in sacks trying to run a race. They soon fell down and finished the race rolling.

"Later, a man in a pied costume came dancing on to the square. He brought several great bowls of hot mush and offered a prize to the fellow who would 'gobble it up' faster than the rest. I fear there were some badly burned tongues after that.

"To all of the household at Myrtle Hill, your Uncle Matthew and I send our regards. Thank them for the letter which reached us two weeks ago, come Tuesday. This I am sending by the next post and it should reach you in due season.

"We have had no word from your

Mother and Father. Uncle Matthew sent letters by the last ship. We are hoping for a reply when it returns.

"Be an obedient and helpful boy. Try to learn your letters so we may hear from you.

"YOUR AFFECTIONATE
AUNT AND UNCLE."

CHAPTER XI

GETTING READY FOR VISITORS

NOT long after his trip to the fields, Tommy found his Cousin Lucy sitting by the little window in the upstairs hall. She was sewing on yellow damask which fell in great folds about her feet.

"Some cousins are coming to visit us, Tommy," she said, "and there will be two boys and a little girl for you to play with."

"What are their names, Cousin Lucy?" Tommy asked.

"One is Richard, the other John, and the little girl is Sally. They are your second-cousins."

"How old are Richard and John, Cousin Lucy?" asked Tommy, who was most interested in the boys.

"Richard and John are a little older than you, and Sally is a little younger. Now run along, Tommy. I must get these curtains ready for the guest-bed. See if you can find Jane and tell her to come here. I want her to get the best blankets out of the chest."

So Tommy went to look for the little black girl who waited on his Cousin Lucy. He had to go to the kitchen before he found her.

There things were all astir. His aunt was standing by a large table in one corner of the kitchen, making little tarts. She wore a big white apron over her bright-colored sack and quilted petticoat, and a cap on her head. The

ruffles of her sleeves were turned back to be out of the way. When Tommy came into the kitchen she was crimping the edges of thin pastry tarts with a little wheel. Dinah was a very good cook, but Mistress Huntington liked to make the special dainties for her family and guests.

Tommy could smell freshly baked cookies and hoped they had caraway seeds in them, for he liked them that way. Dinah often let him go into the pantry to get cookies out of a big stone jar. If he had an apple, too, it was a great treat. Sometimes Aunt Margery made cookies for him in the shape of letters, and he had to say them before he might eat any.

To-day Dinah was busy baking and directing the young negro girls who

worked about the kitchen. She hardly noticed Tommy who stood smelling the cookies.

There was a great scrubbing and rubbing of the copper and brass kettles and saucepans and a cleaning of pewter ladles, pitchers and plates. Everything must be spick and span in the great kitchen for the company. There would be no time for cleaning when the guests arrived. There would be many extra people to feed at the Great House, besides the servants they would bring with them.

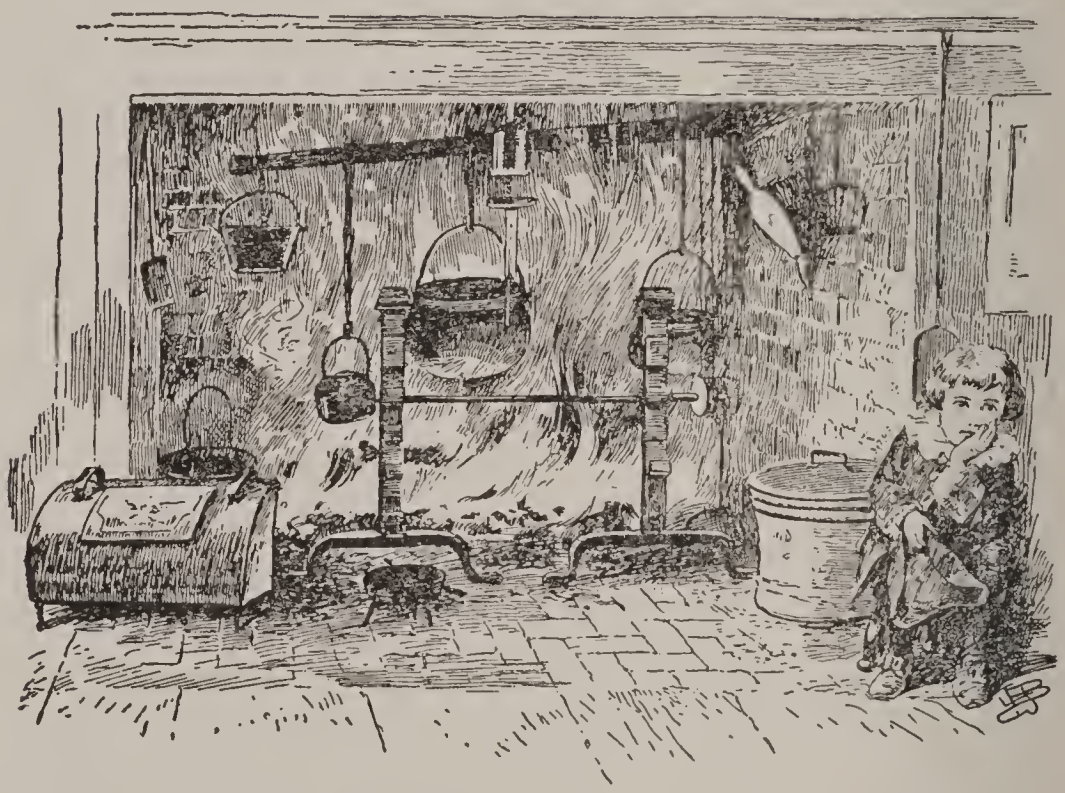
Tommy wandered to the corner by the big fireplace where he could see all that was going on. He hoped some one would ask him to have a cookie after a while. He liked the kitchen as well as any of the places he visited and made

friends, and he especially liked it on rainy days.

There was always a fire in the great fireplace with its many hooks and chains hanging at different lengths over the coals. One or two iron kettles usually hung far back in the fireplace, with hot water in them. The skillets and saucepans had legs or stood on little trivets, made to bring them as near the coals as one wished. A toast-rack hung from the mantel, and beside it a pair of tongs and a long-handled shovel called a "peel." Dinah used these to get dishes in and out of the great brick oven. Over to one side was a box of metal. That was the "tin kitchen." It was a kind of oven, which could be moved close to the fire. This was used often, because the great brick oven was

only heated once a week, on baking-day.

Tommy sat in the corner on a little



TOMMY SAT ON A LITTLE STOOL

stool, with his chin in his hands, watching all the hustle and bustle in the kitchen and listening to the little song the copper teakettle was singing. Nobody seemed to notice him. His aunt

must have known he was there, however, for soon she called him.

"Tommy, run to the store-room with Carrie, and bring me some spice. You may have a cookie when you come back. Carrie is going to chop some citron for me, and I need the spice at once."

Tommy jumped up, and ran after the young negro woman who had started toward the storehouse. He got the spice, and was so anxious to do the errand quickly and get the cookie that he ran into Mammy coming out of the wash-house, with her arms full of clean bedding for the Great House.

"Lawsy, chile! What is you tryin' to do in sech a hurry? Don' yo' run ol' Mammy down," Mammy said.

"I'm sorry, Mammy, but Aunty sent me to the storehouse for spice and I'm

to have a cookie if I get back quickly," Tommy said as he hurried on.

Everywhere the preparation for company went on. The rooms upstairs in the schoolhouse were set in order and an extra bed was put in Tommy's room. Richard and John were to sleep there, and Sally was to have a trundle-bed in the room with her mother. Jim and the young men who were to come to dance, would use the rooms in the schoolhouse. No one minded being a little crowded, for it was such fun to have company.

Tommy was very much excited about having guests near his own age. He was planning to show them about the place and play all his favorite games with them. Perhaps he could even take them to the "quarters" to see the 'possum.

CHAPTER XII

THE VISITORS ARRIVE

WHEN the day came for the guests to arrive, Tommy begged leave to go to the end of the driveway to wait for them. Swift was to stand out on the main road and tell the travellers where to turn in to Myrtle Hill.

The first arrivals came in a plum-colored chariot with yellow wheels, drawn by six black horses. The trimming of the harness was nickel and the buttons on the driver's livery matched it. Swift directed them to the Great House in his most dignified manner.

He was dressed in his green livery, and felt very important. Soon after another coach full of people came and Tommy went back to the Great House to see who they were.

Up at the Great House, all was excitement. Every one was greeting every one else. Lucy and Margaret had captured two young ladies, and chatted gaily with them, as they helped to take off their gay cloaks and big sunbonnets called calashes. These they handed to the negro girls who stood by to help. Servants carried the boxes, full of the visitors' dresses and finery, from the coaches into the house.

Mr. Huntington and his wife stood in the wide hall to greet their guests. Before the first arrivals had been shown to their rooms, two young men on horse-

back rode up to the door. They greeted their host and hostess with low bows and formal phrases, but soon made their way over to the young people who were chattering and laughing together. Tommy recognized one of the young men as the friend who had taken him into the White Crow Ordinary, the day he came to Myrtle Hill.

Young Johns saw the little boy standing, watching from the stairway. He went over to him and put out his hand.

"Good day, Master Talbot. It is a pleasure to see you again, sir," he said.

Tommy was delighted to be remembered and bowed low over Mr. Johns' hand as he had seen his uncle do.

"Oh, sir! I thought you wouldn't remember me," Tommy said.

"Why, of course I do. Come tell me

about the last of your journey and how you like the plantation," he said, leading Tommy to a comfortable-looking sofa in the back of the hall.

Tommy was very ready to talk and tell him about everything, the birch broom he was going to learn to make, the 'possum at the "quarters," his trip to the fields, and a dozen other things he had seen and done.

Before Tommy had told very much of his story, however, a pretty young lady in a brown tabby gown over a yellow petticoat, with her own golden hair piled high in a most elaborate fashion, came over to the sofa.

"Come, Mr. Johns, Mistress Margaret is waiting to show us the steps of a new dance." And laughingly she led the young man toward the ball-room,

leaving Tommy alone on the sofa. He wasn't quite sure he liked the pretty lady, who took his friend away from him.

All during the morning other visitors arrived. The ladies came in bright-colored chariots, the men on horseback.

The three children came with their mammy in a big blue coach drawn by four brown horses. Tommy was in the vegetable garden when they arrived. He saw them get out and go up the steps and tried to decide which was Richard and which was John. The boys wore suits with queer long trousers, split up each side, and short jackets with big buttons on the front. Their hair was cut in bangs and hung to their shoulders. Tommy thought they looked very strange, for his suit was made just like his uncle's, with knee-breeches and a

long-skirted coat which came to his knees. He didn't know that his cousins

CLOTHES FROM LONDON

wore the very latest clothes from London.

Sally was a gay little girl with curly black hair, and very red cheeks. Her dress was long, down to her feet, and her

SALLY

little red cape had a hood to it. She skipped along in front of her mammy and seemed very happy. Tommy

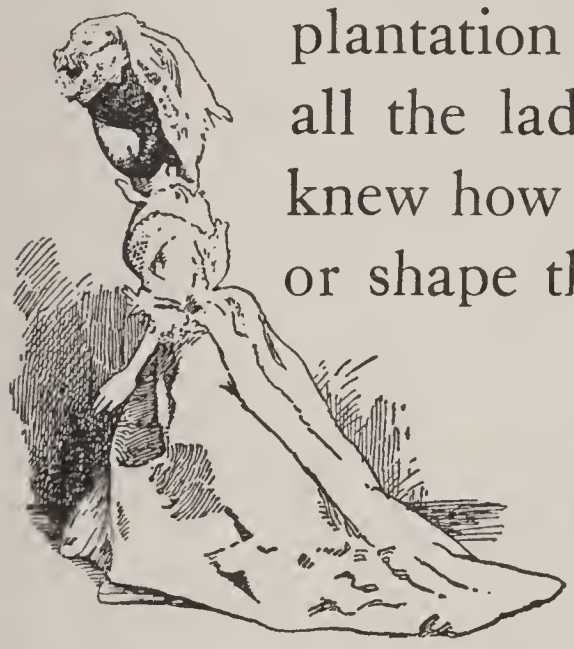
thought perhaps he might like her as well as he would like the boys. She reminded him a little of the twins, too, and he was glad she had come.

When he went into the house to meet his cousins, he found young ladies and gentlemen in the ball-room chatting and laughing and trying the steps of a frolicking new reel. A young negro man played the fiddle for them, and they danced jigs and reels and country dances until the dinner-gong stopped them.

Mr. Huntington had walked off with two of the older men toward the stables. They wanted to talk about the horses and the hounds, and plan for the fox-hunting and the sports for the cold days, which were coming.

The mistress of the house was talking

with two guests in the sunny upper hall. They were telling her bits of neighborhood gossip and about the latest fashions in gowns and hairdressing. One of them had brought with her three "fashion babies," or dolls, from a great London dressmaker. The dolls were costumed completely, from shoes to wigs, in the latest styles. They passed, from one plantation to another, until all the ladies of the colony knew how to dress their hair or shape their hoops just as the ladies in London did. When the "babies" were old, they were given to the little girls to play with and made very nice dolls indeed.



"FASHION DOLL"

The three children were downstairs looking about, when Tommy met them. They all knew his name, for Aunt Margery had told them. He soon learned that Richard was taller than John, and in spite of their queer clothes, he thought them very friendly and liked them very much. Both boys loved little Sally and were used to playing with her, so Tommy decided she could go everywhere with them. When they had become acquainted Tommy said:

"Wouldn't you like to go out and see everything?"

"May we go, Mammy?" they asked of the smiling negro woman who had come to watch out for them.

"Sholy you kin, if you don' git too far away ter hyar de dinin'-bell."

"Oh, Mammy," Tommy said, "you

can hear our bell all over the place, it rings so long and so loud."

"All right, chilluns. Run along, an' don' you git in trouble de bery fus minute you gits hyar," she warned them.

So off the four children went. Tommy was proud to be the host, and his guests were eager to see everything.

CHAPTER XIII

ENTERTAINING AT MYRTLE HILL

THE big dinner-gong sounded before the children made the rounds of the gardens and out-buildings. They scampered back over the lawn and stopped at the sun-dial. By standing on the stone base, Tommy could see the figures on the face of the dial. He was proud to be able to tell the time by the slim shadow falling across the numbers.

"Why, it is only two o'clock," Tommy said. "The dinner-gong should not sound until three."

Tommy's mammy came to hurry them along. "Come along, chilluns,

dinner am early to-day. Dere is many to serb an' de ladies mus' hab time to res' an' make deysef's han'some."

She took the children into the library

THE SUN-DIAL

where a table had been set for them, that they might be served quickly and not have to sit through the long meal with their elders.

Mr. and Mistress Huntington were waiting in the wide hall for their guests to assemble. The young people were in high spirits after dancing, and quite ready for their dinner. When every one was there, each gentlemen bowed to a lady and offered her his arm. Then the gay company went into the dining-room.

The door between the library and the dining-room was left open, and the children could see the serving-men go back and forth offering savory dishes. For a while they watched and ate their meal in silence, but soon the four were chattering about their own affairs.

Tommy told about the time he found his Cousin Jim's wig and was caught trying it on. The little guests told about their own home and the events of the

morning trip. Sally started a story about Indians in the deep woods they had come through. She knew she had seen a feathered head-dress behind a tree, and once when she looked back, a great brown savage had crouched down behind a bush. The boys laughed at her and said no Indians lived in the forests now. They told her that long ago, a hundred years ago, there had been Indians, but not this morning. But Sally was sure she had seen Indians that very day. Her mammy told her, and so had her father, that Indians lived in the woods, and she knew they did, and nothing the boys could say made her change her mind.

Long before the grown folk finished their heavy meal, Mammy took the four children upstairs to rest. They had

been promised that they might stay up a little while that evening to see the dancing if they would take a nap after dinner. After the long ride and exciting morning, it was not many minutes before they were all asleep.

By six o'clock, the young people from the nearer plantations began to arrive. Candles twinkled from every corner of the Great House, up-stairs and down. A fire crackled on the hearth in the library, for the nights were getting cool.

Soon the house was full of the voices of the young people and blooming with gay colors of rustling silk gowns and bright plush and satin suits. The polished floors reflected the luster of rich brocades and jeweled buckles at the knees and on silken slippers. The white-paneled rooms, with their high

ceilings and walls hung with family portraits, made a perfect setting for the white-wigged and beruffled beaux, with their snuff-boxes, and the beautifully gowned ladies with their elaborate head-dresses. Eyes sparkled in the candle-light and teased behind fans, and soft voices filled the house with merriment.

The children looked on from the stair-way with the same feeling of importance that children always have when they are allowed to stay up for a grown-up party. They, too, were dressed in their best clothes.

The music began as soon as the guests arrived, and the ball opened with the minuet. Old and young moved through its stately steps with grace and dignity. In the hall, the children fol-lowed some of the figures, for even

Sally was having dancing-lessons, and the boys, too, learned to dance before they went to school. In those happy days in Virginia, dancing was every gentleman's accomplishment.

THE MINUET

Reels and jigs followed the minuet, and then came square dances with the negro fiddlers calling the figures. Between dances, couples wandered into the hall, on the porch, or into the garden.

About nine o'clock the dining-room was opened and supper was announced. For those who wished refreshment, punch was served from a great silver bowl which was never allowed to become empty. Later, card-tables were set up in the library for any who tired of dancing.

The children grew tired of watching the dancers and nodded before the dining-room was opened, but they wouldn't give in and go to bed until they had seen the supper-table set with its fine silver and glass and lit by a great branched candlestick that Sally said looked like a Christmas-tree. They were allowed to taste of the dainties spread on the table, but they were all too sleepy to care much for food.

When their mammies came to take

them upstairs, they were quite ready to go. It had been a long and exciting day. After Sally was tucked in her trundle-bed, Mammy sat dozing outside of her door, waiting for the guests to go. Even after Sally's mother came up to bed, the fiddlers played on, and when the dance was over and the young ladies had retired in the first gray of dawn, cards and the punch-bowl held the attention of some of those Virginia gallants.

The household woke late the day after the ball and found a gray, wet world outside. The wind blew the trees about and splashed the rain against the window-panes. By the time the children got downstairs, all signs of the party had disappeared. The black boys had made fires on every hearth, and inside it

was as cheery and as dry as could be. Nobody seemed to mind the storm.

One by one, the guests gathered for late breakfast. The young men came up from their rooms in the schoolhouse in great coats and sherry-vallies. These were a kind of legging they wore in wet weather to protect them from the mud. They buttoned up on the outside of the trousers, and kept the silk-clad legs of the young beaux dry and spotless.

The children were allowed to breakfast with their elders. The company was as gay as the night before, and neither the storm nor the lateness of the ball seemed to affect the spirits of the young people, who were planning to dance all that day.

Gowns and suits had changed from

brilliant brocades and velvets to more simple materials, such as shalloon and silk serge. Lucy and Margaret Huntington wore simple print ginghams with long muslin aprons and kerchiefs, and quaint caps called coifs. The elaborate hairdressing and ornaments of jewels and ribbon were kept for parties, then as now.

They breakfasted slowly on fish and chicken, eggs, bacon, corn cakes, batter bread, muffins, tea and coffee, and fruit. It was well past noon when they left the dining-room. The young people and the children went into the ball-room. Uncle Zed was sent for, and they danced away the remainder of the day.

Mistress Huntington took her older guests to her own room, where before the cheery fire, the good ladies gossiped

and exchanged ideas about cookery and their embroideries and handiwork.

Downstairs in the library, the men discussed the crops and the races, the last sitting of the County Court, the price of tobacco and the risks of selling and shipping.

When the children tired of the ball-room, they played blind-man's buff, fox-in-the-warren, prisoners' base, and cat, in the great hall upstairs and down. No one minded their pattering feet and gay laughter. Mammy brought them caraway cookies, and gathered them about her towards dinner-time when they were tired and a bit cross, to listen to stories.

It was still raining and storming after dinner and quite impossible for any of the guests to leave. The roads, which

were none too good in fair weather became almost impassable after a rain. Unbridged "runs" grew into uncrossable torrents and "chuck-holes" endangered the traveller over roads which were little more than trails through the wilderness of forest separating one plantation from another.

No one thought of leaving as long as it stormed. They knew they were welcome as long as they cared to stay. It was no uncommon thing in these days to keep the festive spirit of a ball alive for several days. Guests came from long distances and were expected to stay and partake of the hospitality of their host as long as they cared to.

It cleared off the next day, but some of the guests decided to remain over another night, as the streams were much

swollen and the roads still dangerous for the heavy coaches.

The young men rode off early in the day and Jim with them. That put an end to the dancing, but the girls amused themselves playing singing-games with the children part of the morning. In the afternoon they worked on a quilt which was set up on a frame in the up-stairs hall. As their needles twinkled in and out, making those tiny stitches which covered the quilts of olden days, they chattered about the events of their happy, care-free lives, and of their homely occupations on the plantations, when parties were not going on.

Mistress Huntington had a new recipe for potpourri which had come in her last letter from England. She copied it out in her neat little writing

with a big quill pen and gave each of the girls a copy and bade them start a jar the first thing next spring.

This is what the recipe told them to do:

"Dry your violets in a sunny window. Have ready a quarter of a pound of finely powdered bay salt. When the roses are out, gather all kinds and dry in the same way. Then add them to the violets, putting a layer of salt between each two layers of flower-petals. Gather a good deal of lavender, also the leaves of the verbena, and, if possible, myrtle and orange blossoms. After all flowers and salt have filled the jar, its contents should be constantly stirred for a month."

This would keep the fragrant breath of the garden in the house long after the flowers had died outside.

The boys spent the afternoon in the

carpenter-shop making birch brooms just as the Indians used to make them. An old negro man who promised Tommy to show him how to make a broom, as soon as his fingers were strong enough to whittle, had the birch saplings all cut and ready.

Tommy and Richard worked very hard until their fingers were sore and tired. The stout saplings had to be splintered carefully, and Tommy found he was cutting most of his off before he came to the end of the stick. This wouldn't leave him any bristles to turn back and tie together. He grew discouraged and wanted to make a butter paddle instead. Richard was very slow and careful, but it was hard work for him, too.

John didn't even try to make a broom.

He was content to whittle out little bits of nothing from scraps he found on the floor. These he called boats, and sailed them happily to foreign lands under the carpenter's-bench until it was time to go back to the Great House.

Sally had stayed with the girls to snip and sew wee bits of silk and ribbon for her wooden doll. At home she worked on a sampler every day. It was to have a row of letters and figures and her name in cross-stitch.

CHAPTER XIV

GOING TO CHURCH

THE four little cousins waited anxiously for Sunday to come. They wished that the day would be fine. Mistress Huntington had promised to let them go to church in the boat.

Tommy had been to church only twice since he came to Myrtle Hill. It was a great treat to be allowed to go. He enjoyed the trip on the water, and liked to see the new faces and scenes. His little cousins went no oftener than he. From their home, it was a long way to the church. The trip had to be made in

the chariot or chair. To go in a boat would be a new and exciting adventure for them.

When Sunday came, it was a perfect, early autumn day. The sky was blue and the air was fresh and cool.

The children dressed in their Sunday clothes. Richard and John wore smart blue silk suits with knee-breeches. The long-skirted coats were ornamented with pearl buttons, and the ruffles of their shirts were very fresh and trim. They had silver buckles at their knees and on their shoes. Their hair was tied in queues with black ribbons.

Sally was in yellow challis, embroidered with little bunches of bright flowers, made short-waisted with the skirt to the ankles. The neck was round with a dainty tucker folded

neatly across her shoulders. Little puff-sleeves left her chubby arms bare nearly to the shoulders. She wore tiny silk mitts which came to her elbows. On her bobbing black curls was a sheer muslin cap, framing her rosy cheeks with its frilly ruffle.

Tommy wore brown tabby, cut from one of his aunt's old gowns. It had a gay flowered vest trimmed with shining brass buttons. He felt quite as dressed-up as his cousins.

Long before it was time to start, the children were ready. Mammy gathered their wraps for them. She found it hard to keep the eager children from going down to the river before it was time.

Mistress Huntington and Sally's mother were to go to church in the coach, the girls following in the chariot,

and Jim and his father on horseback. The children were much more excited about the trip than their mammies. Tommy asked his mammy if she were afraid.

She said, "Chile, Ah, ain't 'zackly 'feared, but Ah likes to feel de lan' under mah feet."

When the children grew too restless to wait any longer, Mistress Huntington told Mammy to let them get into their wraps and go down to the wharf. Richard and John put on gray duffel coats and black beaver hats laced with silver cord. Tommy had a brown drugget cape and a little three-cornered beaver hat. Sally wore a merry little red cape with a hood. As she skipped along, it spread out behind her like bright wings.

It was a very happy and important

party that chattered along the path down to the river-side. The big flat-bottomed boat was already tied to the wharf. Two young negroes in their master's livery of green and buff sat waiting for the folks from the Great House.

There was a lot of talk among the negroes as to how the party should be seated. The children were anxious to be off and could hardly wait to get aboard. At last it was decided that a mammy should sit at each end and two children on each of the two seats. This seemed to please every one.

Getting the party into the boat was harder than deciding how they should sit. The old negro women were too heavy to be lifted into the boat. The steps down the side of the wharf were steep and narrow. For all Mammy's

saying she was not afraid, the children knew that she was. They even laughed at her as she stood trying to make up her mind to step into the unsteady boat. At last she sat down on the edge of the wharf and let herself down a step at a time, until she landed in the boat. Then it took a long time for her to go to the far end of it. With one of the young negroes on either side to steady her, she was finally seated without mishap.

The other woman saw that no harm had come to her companion and she was much braver. One of the men lifted Sally off the wharf right over to her seat. The boys wanted to walk down the steps and across the boat alone, and the good-natured servants let them have their own way. Finally they all got aboard safely, and the rowers took their places. Their

long, steady strokes soon put the boat out into the center of the creek and headed her up-stream.

For about half an hour they rowed up the winding creek between banks overhung with trees and vines. The two frightened passengers were soon over their fear and fell to talking with the rowers. The children enjoyed every minute. They pointed to one thing after another along the banks, or watched the water for fish. Birds sang in the trees, and once Richard thought he saw a deer trot off into the woods. Tommy jumped up in his excitement and poor Mammy expected him to fall overboard, but he didn't. Once they passed near the bank where there was a colony of beavers. One or two of the little animals that were sunning them-

selves on a floating log swam hurriedly into shore when the splash of the oars startled them. All too soon they came in sight of the little wharf where they were to stop, and the whole party was safely unloaded.

A short distance from the water stood the church. It was old, even then, and had been built from some of the first bricks ever made from Virginia clay. It had no steeple. The walls were covered with vines. The long windows were narrow, with small panes of plain glass. Vines grew over the windows in many places, and made as pretty a pattern as in any stained glass. The bell was hung from the branch of a great oak-tree near the church door.

Already several coaches and chairs had arrived, bringing the planters and

their families. The children had been told to wait until their elders came before they went into the church. They amused themselves as well as they could in their Sunday clothes, and Sunday manners.

Tommy saw a flying squirrel, and the three boys started off into the woods back of the church after it. They quite forgot their best clothes and their Sunday manners then. Off they ran as fast as they could to watch the little creature. It took great leaps, spreading out its four little legs, fairly sailing through the air, from tree to tree.

The boys might have gone far into the woods if John had not tripped over a log. He fell flat. His black beaver hat flew off into the leaves. Tommy and Richard ran back to see if he were hurt.

He had only skinned his leg. They brushed him off, and found he had made a hole in his silk stocking, lost one silver knee-buckle and torn his wrist ruffles.

John began to cry. Richard comforted him as well as he could. Then they all started to look for the lost buckle.

Back at the church, Sally was watching the people. She saw them exchange greetings with their friends. The ladies rustled into the church and the men remained outside. Church was one of the few places where people could meet and be sociable. It was the place for exchanging views on all subjects, and talking over the events of the neighborhood.

Mr. Huntington and Jim arrived before the ladies from Myrtle Hill. Their horses were left in charge of a groom

who had come with them from the plantation. They joined different groups of gentlemen, gathered around the church door. Jim was more interested in talking over the latest racing victories and cock-fights than his father, who was deeply interested in the standing of the tobacco market and political affairs of the colony. The men always remained outside, talking, until the service began.

Just before the bell rang, Mistress Huntington, her guest, and the girls arrived. They made a brave showing in their bright-colored silk and velvet mantuas and gay bonnets.

Sally ran to meet them. There had been so much to see that she had not missed the boys. Now that it was time to go into church, they were nowhere to be found. Mistress Huntington sent

Mammy to tell one of the young negro men from the plantation to look for the boys. Certainly they could not have gone very far away.

The sexton came out to ring the church bell. Mistress Huntington and Sally's mother decided to go into church without Tommy, Richard, and John. Just as they started to enter the church Sally saw the boys coming from the woods back of the church.

They all looked a bit the worse for their run. However, it was too late to scold them for the torn ruffles and stocking. John tried to tell his mother about the lost buckle but she hurried him into the church. The children were not allowed to sit together but were placed between their elders in the several pews used by the family.

These pews were built like big square boxes with seats on all four sides. Some of the people had to sit facing away from the minister.

IN CHURCH

At the opening of the service the men were sent for and came in to join their families. There was the clicking of latches all through the church, as the men opened and closed the little doors to their pews. Then there was quiet and the service began.

The service was not long and the cushioned seats were comfortable. Sally went to sleep during the sermon

with her head on Cousin Lucy's lap. Many a grown-up was seen nodding, too.

After church there was a general social time. Invitations to dinner were given and accepted. Then the groups began to break up. The ladies sought their coaches and the gentlemen mounted their horses. The young people of Myrtle Hill drove away to dine with friends at a neighboring plantation. Long before the last coach had driven off, the children and their mammies were safely aboard the boat and on their way back to the plantation.

CHAPTER XV

THE SHIP COMES IN

ONE morning, after all the guests had gone, Tommy stood by himself under the tulip-tree. He missed his little cousins very much. The Great House was quiet again and it was harder to play alone since the cousins had been there.

The leaves were turning yellow and red and beginning to fall from the trees. Tommy liked to watch them come floating down, and see them chase each other back and forth across the lawn.

A flock of wild geese flew honking overhead. He ran to the top of the hill

so he could watch them flying in long V-shaped lines down the river. He wondered how Solomon was getting along back in Norfolk. Perhaps these were Solomon's cousins. Tommy thought how lonely Solomon must be if geese missed their cousins as much as boys did. As he stood watching a few stragglers racing to catch up with the flock, he saw a white sail far down on the river. He waited a minute to be sure, and then ran as fast as he could toward the house.

"Uncle, Uncle!" he cried. "The ship is coming. I see the sails!"

He was out of breath when he reached the house with the good news. His uncle was sitting in the library reading before the fire. He wore a banyan, or loose gown of brightly-colored striped

material. On his head, in place of the usual neat white wig, was a small close cap.

"Oh, Uncle," Tommy said. "The ship is coming, I saw her sails."

"Good news, lad," Mr. Huntington said, getting up from his place before the fire. "Let us see whether the glass can tell us if it really is the *Lucy Lee*."

He went over to the bookcase and took down a long, round, leather case. Out of it he took a spy-glass. Tommy had often seen his uncle use this thing that looked like a brass tube. He knew that you looked in the smaller end and could see things that were a long way off, but he had been told never to touch the spy-glass, so he knew very little about it.

The planter and the little boy went

out on the lawn where they could see the river. Sure enough, there was a ship, sailing toward them with her white sails puffed out in the morning breeze. Tommy was so excited that he jumped up and down and waved his arms, shouting, "Hurrah, hurrah for the *Lucy Lee!*" His uncle adjusted the spy-glass to get a clearer view of the ship.

"Sure enough, it is the good ship *Lucy* with Captain Thomas at the wheel. She will be at the tobacco wharf before long," he said. "Here, Tommy, would you like to look for yourself? I must dress and go at once to the wharf to meet her."

By this time several of the servants working about the house had seen the sails and were looking with as much interest as their master, toward the ship re-

turning from its long voyage all safe and sound. Mr. Huntington left Tommy with the spy-glass and hurried to the house. He gave orders as he passed, to have his horse saddled and at the door as soon as it could be done.

Tommy felt very important being left in charge of the spy-glass. He pointed it toward the ship and put his eye to the smaller end as he had seen his uncle do. He expected to see the ship as plain as if he were close to it. He was very much disappointed. With the eye looking through the glass he couldn't see anything, and with the other eye he saw the lawn and the trees and the river just the same as before.

Something was wrong, but he didn't know what to do. He started all over again. This time he tried shutting the

eye which was not looking through the glass, but he found that one eye wouldn't stay shut unless he shut the other, too. This was very disturbing. He put the spy-glass on the ground and tried to shut one eye without shutting the other. But try as hard as he could, there was no way he could do it without holding his hand over the eye he didn't want to see out of. He thought this would work.

So he took up the spy-glass and held it to his right eye and kept his hand over his left one. It would have been all right if the glass had not been so heavy. With only one hand to hold it, the long tube wobbled so that Tommy saw first blurred green grass and then sky, and once, for a second, the river. Then it was gone, and try as hard as he could, he didn't find it again.

Tommy was discouraged and his arms were tired. He sat down on the lawn with the glass beside him to watch the ship with his own two eyes. Spy-glasses, he decided, were not meant for little boys to use.

But after a while, he took up the spy-glass again. He found by propping it on his knees he could hold it quite steady with one hand. Then to his delight, with just a little trying, he found the ship. He was very excited indeed. It was wonderful to be able to see the ship so plainly when she was really quite far away.

He watched her come up to the wharf and saw the sailors let down the sails. His uncle went on board, and by and by he came ashore with a man that Tommy guessed was Captain Thomas.

The dinner-bell called Tommy to the house long before he was tired of looking through the spy-glass. He didn't want to go in, for he was afraid he never would be allowed to use it again.

Mr. Huntington brought Captain Thomas to the Great House to dinner. He was welcomed by Mistress Huntington and her daughters as a special guest. For many years he had faithfully carried the planter's crops of tobacco to the London merchants. On every trip he also took letters from the family at Myrtle Hill to their friends and relatives in England.

This time he brought back letters for all the family and two for Tommy Tucker. One was from his Mother and one from his Father. Tommy was as proud as could be, for he was able to

read his own name on the outside. He was learning to read so well that he thought now he might read his letters all alone. Perhaps he would need a little help if the writing wasn't quite plain, but he wanted to try all by himself.

There was always great excitement on the plantation when the ship came back and was unloaded. The great boxes and bales were carried up to the house and unpacked. All the family stood around and waited with eager delight to see what there would be just for them. Jim had told Tommy what happened when the ship came in, so of course he was anxious to see the great boxes and bales, and what was in them. He could hardly wait until the long dinner was over.

Tommy was always allowed to leave

the table before the toasts were given and drunk. That was a ceremony more interesting to his elders than to Tommy.

To-day when he was excused he ran outside to see the porters bring the things from the ship. While he waited, he opened his letters, but to his surprise he wasn't quite sure of any of the words but his own name.

It was not long before a line of negroes came up the hill from the wharf. They were bareheaded and barefooted and their backs bent under their heavy loads. A man that Tommy thought was a sailor, directed them. Some of the men brought boxes to the porch of the Great House and others containing supplies were carried to the storehouse.

By the time the family finished dinner, many bales and boxes were piled up on

the porch. Tommy was very anxious for the opening to begin, but he still had some time to wait.

Mr. Huntington and Captain Thomas went into the little office room where the great desk stood and closed the door. Here they went over many papers and the planter checked long lists as he compared them with other lists the captain had.

Jim was off paying a visit to Mr. Johns. Tommy was so sorry to have Jim miss the opening of the ship's boxes, but he knew that Jim would be glad to miss the business in the office.

Mistress Huntington ordered large pieces of canvas to be laid in the hall so the boxes might be unpacked without marring the polished floor. When the planter and Captain Thomas opened

the door of the office, everything was ready for the unpacking to begin. Two of the house-servants had carried in a big box and stood waiting for their master's order to open it. Mistress Huntington told Tommy to call Lucy and Margaret from the music-room. He did this quickly.

Chairs were brought, and the family sat down around the canvas-covered space. Word was given to the negroes to open the box. Tommy suddenly left his seat and disappeared. His aunt saw him go, but said nothing. Just before the last wrappings were off the box, Tommy came back with Mammy. He couldn't have his faithful friend miss this great event in plantation life.

After her mistress had nodded a smiling approval, Mammy sat down apart

from the family. Tommy stood by her and tried to guess what the very first thing out of the box would be. He leaned over to whisper to Mammy about it.

"Chile, hit will be pretty clo's foh de Missus an' a bran'-new suit for Massa, an' a new hat foh lil' Massa, dats what hit'll be," Mammy told him.

But she was quite wrong. When the box was opened, the negroes stepped aside and the master went over to it.

"Now guess," he said, "what the very first thing will be."

But before they had time to say a word, he reached down and brought up a queer-shaped bundle. It was unwrapped and held up so every one could see it was a shining silver cake-basket. Mistress Huntington was delighted.

She got up and went over to the box and helped her husband to take out one by one, many fine pieces of silver for her side-board. There was a sugar-bowl and tongs, a cream-pitcher, and a sauce-boat; spoons of all sizes and kinds, a few forks, and a coffee-pot.

The next box, and two after it, were full of clothes and whole bolts of material for Mistress Huntington and the girls. There was great joy and excitement over each garment taken out. The girls wanted to try on everything right away. There were masks and gloves, shoes, stockings, laces and ribbons, and enough finery to make them happy for a long time.

Next there were books for Mr. Huntington's library. Then came china,

which was packed so well that not a piece was broken in all that long trip from London to the Virginia plantation.

Then came a box marked "For Master Talbot Matthew Tucker." Tommy was called over to get his present. It was so heavy that he could scarcely carry it. He took it to Aunt Margery. A servant opened the box and the family gathered around Tommy to watch him unpack his presents. There was a toy pair of scales and a spying-glass which was just the right size for Tommy to manage. He had to look through it at everything around the hall before he unpacked anything else. Next he took out a little drum and then a game of Battledore and Shuttle. Lucy and Margaret started at once to bat the gay little

shuttle back and forth. They came running back to Tommy, however, when he called out joyously:

"Look at my beautiful horse and cart! Look, Lucy and Margaret! Look, everybody!"

He held up a little tin horse, drawing a tiny cart, painted bright red. It was a simple toy, but Tommy was delighted. He left the box, without waiting to see if there were anything more in it and started to push the little cart about on the polished floor. The wheels went around and the horse's legs looked as if he were walking even though they couldn't move.

In the bottom of the box Lucy found a beautiful little hornbook with an ivory back. On the front was the alphabet and a row of figures, from one to nine

and the Lord's Prayer. These were printed in red, and covered with a very thin, clear piece of horn. Mistress Huntington said she had never seen a prettier one. Then there was a real book called "Mother Goose's Melodies" in a flowery and gilt binding, with the queerest little pictures inside.

Tommy left his horse and cart to look at the books. He was so delighted to find his name in the front of the little Mother Goose book that he carried it off to show Mammy.

By the time the boxes were unpacked it was nearly dark. The candles were lit and supper was ready before they knew it.

Just as they were going into the dining-room, Jim and Mr. Johns came in. They had been out on horseback

and seeing the sail on the river, guessed it was the *Lucy Lee*. They had ridden in all haste to Myrtle Hill to join the fun.

They had a very gay supper indeed. Because it was a special occasion, Tommy was allowed to go to the table and to sit next to his friend, Mr. Johns, who promised to read his letters to him after supper. Tommy tried to listen to all the gay talk around him and keep awake. However it was much later than his usual bed-time, and try as hard as he could, his eyes would go shut and he nodded between bites of supper.

He was sound asleep before the meal was finished and Mr. Johns carried him up stairs. Mammy put him to bed without waking him up.

He was still dreaming about boxes

and bales laden with treasures when Mammy called him next morning. The first thing he saw when he opened

SOUND ASLEEP

his eyes was the little tin horse and his book and precious letters. Some one had put them inside the curtains at the

foot of his bed. He guessed it was Mammy, who always remembered what pleased her "chile."

So Tommy began another happy day on the big plantation. He liked it so well there that he stayed on until he was old enough to go back to England to school.

When he came to Virginia again, he brought the twins, and then he was so grown-up that no one even thought of calling him Tommy Tucker.

THE END

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